

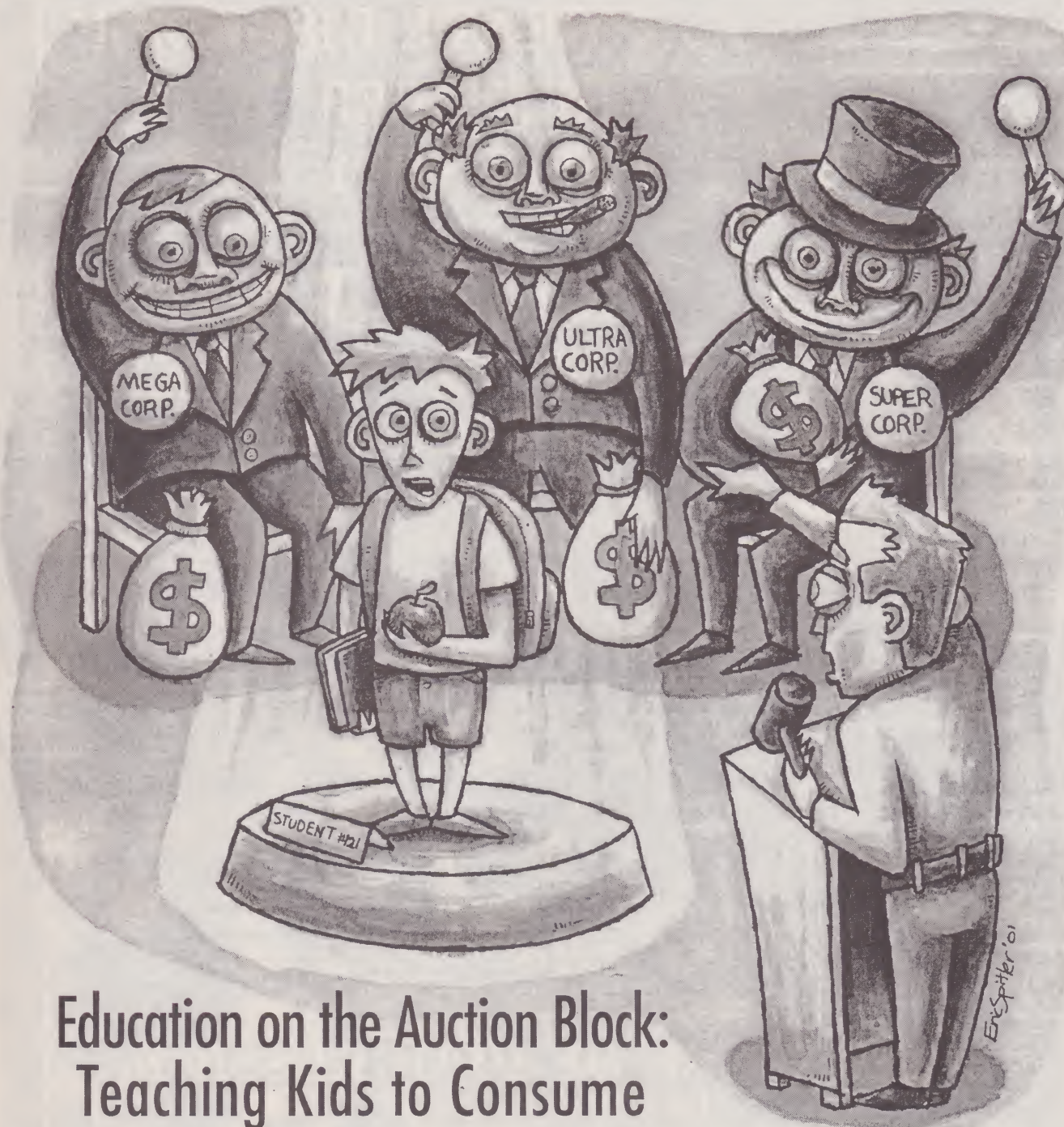
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## Education on the Auction Block: Teaching Kids to Consume

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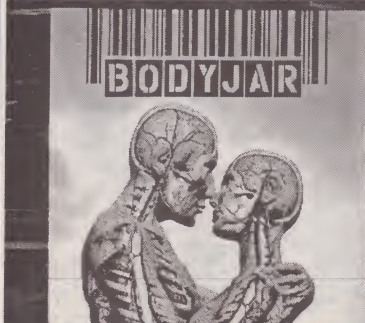
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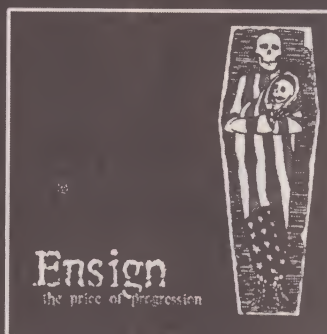




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# things within

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## Education on the Auction Block: Teaching Kids to Consume

by Morris Sullivan

Kids have always been a hot market, but most advertisers had to be content with spots during Saturday morning cartoons. Then someone hit on a great idea: turn the school into a billboard and the classrooms into a high-tech marketing venue. • PAGE 26

"As [UK] ambassador to Colombia, I watched the endless Anglo-US campaigns against drug traffickers and I know they will never work... I have come to realise that the war is unwinnable, costly and counter-productive."

"Man shapes himself through decisions that shape his environment."

"Whoso neglects learning in his youth, loses the past and is dead for the future."

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-- Sir Keith Morris, July 4, 2001

-- Rene Dubos

-- Euripides



# IMPACT<sup>®</sup> press

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**A Fact from IMPACT:** In the United States, federal law states that children's TV shows may contain only 10 minutes of advertising per hour and on weekends the limit is 10 and one-half minutes.



"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



# From The Editor

178 to 1. That's one hell of a majority. The 178 represents the number of countries that approved the Kyoto Treaty. The "1" represents an America led by ignorance. GW says the treaty is flawed. The rest of the world, and a majority of Americans, say sign the damn thing. I can't argue with that attitude. I feel the same way. However, with GW's administration standing firmly empty-headed in their decision, Americans must move forward and force their own change. Being aware of the intelligence of the global community and the cluelessness of the American legislation (mostly the White House and conservatives) is key in recognizing the importance of this issue.

"We were capable of showing the United States and our citizens and the NGOs [non-governmental organizations] that we could come to an agreement without the United States," commented European Union (EU) Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom shortly after a Kyoto Treaty compromise was met.

In response to the compromise, Paula Dobriansky, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs stated that "the Bush administration takes the issue of climate change very seriously and we will not abdicate our responsibilities."

But I ask, responsibility to whom? It's obviously big business. It has always been big business with GW, from energy to pharmaceuticals to the environment. Our responsibility should be to the Earth and our fellow people. Instead it's a responsibility to selfish, capitalistic interests that benefit very few, even in America.

Dobriansky went on to say, "Although the United States does not intend to ratify that agreement, we have not tried to stop others from moving ahead as long as U.S. interests are not threatened. It does not change our view that the protocol is not sound policy."

That pisses me off. Who the hell is she to

say what U.S. interests are? I'm an American citizen and I'm positive she's not concerned about my interests. It clearly shows, as Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle recently put it, just how isolationist this administration is.

How much more obvious is America's isolation when you have Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations, Baghir Adasi, weighing in: "The success of Bonn is the very direct outcome of dialogue, mutual understanding and a sense of engagement. This represents the triumph of multinationalism over unilateralism."

"The agreement is a geopolitical earthquake," commented Jennifer Morgan, Director of World Wildlife Federation Climate Change Campaign. "Other countries have demonstrated their independence from the Bush administration on the world's most critical environmental problem."

And now Americans should demonstrate their independence from an often-fascist administration. Consider donating your tax rebate (if you're one of the "lucky" ones who receive it) to a proactive organization that is fighting GW (such as United for a Fair Economy or MoveOn.org). Be vocal about the importance of environmental action. Don't let anyone tell you that global warming is a myth. Know the facts (see links below) and live wisely. The time and "inconvenience" of living more environmentally is invaluable. Experience it and share it with others. Recycle, conserve and educate.

• craig mazer •

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<http://www.fabclimate.org>

**Climate Ark**

<http://www.climateark.org>

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**United for a Fair Economy**

<http://www.rejecttherebate.org>

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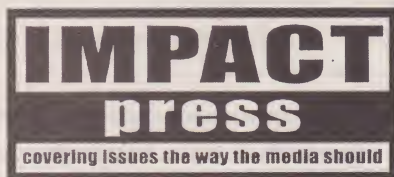
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# Speak Your Mind. . .

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will try to decipher them. However, help us avoid having to do extra work. ALSO - keep your letters under 400 words. Thanks!

## IMPACT:

The Drug War (referring to "Just Say Yes", Issue #33) is about what every other war is about - Money. Why can we easily go out and buy a pack of Camels and a six pack of Bud, but not any other type of intoxicating substance?

It's all about money, who can get it and who will give it away. Money makes this world go 'round. It takes acres of land to grow tobacco for a cigarette company. From that land, owners pay the government large amounts of property taxes. Also, many companies like Philip-Morris, donate money through other affiliations of their own to presidential candidates (ever wonder why everything is so hush-hush?) Now, if I can grow a nice little stash of weed in my closet in the privacy of my own home, how does the government benefit from that? Give up? They won't! I'm not taking up their land anymore than my house does, and I'll spend most of my stoned time thinking of ways to over throw them anyway.

If people used these drugs as much and as openly as senators drink, well then, this would be an easy answer. As far as the "War on Drugs", it's nothing but a popularity stunt.

This is our country, let's take it back!

— 'drew

## IMPACT:

Saw the article in Impact Press about prison rape ("Mindpower: A Taboo Subject" by Patrick Scott Barnes, Issue #33). Excellent prose! A hard-hitting, thought provoking, insightful and cutting edge piece of journalism. Too bad more alleged "journalists" don't (or can't) follow your lead. My hat is off to you. I am impressed.

Richard Miller

## IMPACT:

*Excerpted from Issue #33 Editorial:* "This imbalance of reporting goes lengths to desensitize young people. There were 16 killings amongst 52 million school students in the U.S. in 2000. Yet, school-shooting sensationalism made it seem like these occurrences were happening daily. Instead of offering up positive images of students, children are constantly shown negative situations"

Wow! You actually wrote something I agree with. This is certainly a shocker. Seems as if the liberal press is all too willing to buy into our culture of violence. Considering the fact that 100 million people died in the 20th century - all the victims of peacetime leftist revolutions - it's not hard to see that there's a definite connection between leftism and violence. Keep on exposing those leftists for what they really are: violent hate mongers.

"W"

## IMPACT:

I just wanted to let you know that the article "Fish Are Not Swimming Vegetables" (by Dawn Carr, Issue #33) is really good and really well written. I sent the link to a lot of people. Even being a vegan, I find it very informative and educational, as well as persuasive.

Thanks,  
Jess

## IMPACT:

Patrick Scott Barnes' Issue #32 "Mind Power" column was mainstream media - more opinion than fact.

Zach's death was tragic, but his fault. Paul has a right to self-defense and was probably plea bargained by a lazy lawyer. Un-

less there are more facts, I would not vote to convict.

The Second Amendment was written by men who armed themselves against a tyrannical government they sought to remove and won. An armed person can assert its will not to be subjugated.

This amendment is a right of the people. Its wording contains a noun phrase, a participial phrase, and an independent clause. The only thought that can stand as a sentence says 'The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.' Infringed means broken, violated, or neglected to be obeyed. That all free people may own guns is crystal clear.

For every "hot head" waiting to cool off, a quiet stalking victim may be prevented from acquiring Colonel Colt's equality and becoming a homicide statistic.

Barnes' other "facts?" Japan is a police state with limited civil rights. Switzerland has more firearms per capita and one of the world's lowest homicide rates. As there is not yet national firearm registration, there is no reliable figure for how many [guns] are in Texas or any other state - yet. Thanks to Reno, the number of legal arms dealers is half that cited. Warren Burger is disputed by dozens of jurists, past and present. The mainstream media have finally latched onto bullying as a problem in school and I hope the school administrators address it to prevent violence.

Here are facts. Smaller rural areas with high rates of private firearms ownership have low homicide rates. Large urban areas with "gun control" have high homicide rates. Hitler, Stalin and Mao all used "gun control" to disarm and decimate the populace to the tune of 60-100 million humans. Private firearms were used with success by the oppressed during the 1960's civil rights movement to prevent violence. The "Dead White



# Speak Your Mind. . .

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will try to decipher them. However, help us avoid having to do extra work. ALSO - keep your letters under 400 words. Thanks!

Guys" wrote many words elsewhere explaining in detail exactly what the Second Amendment means. Leaving a helpless citizenry was not one of their flaws. The government courts have ruled you have no right to police protection, so that it is perfectly legal for the police to be too busy to respond. If you die, too bad.

Citizen or revolutionary, arm yourself. Learn to use your firearm well. If you feel that the armed person would be no match for the government, the Warsaw Jews, with 70 firearms, held up an SS division for a month. Imagine if each of the 70,000 had been armed.

You quote Thomas Jefferson elsewhere. He also said, "Let no free man [sic] be debarred the use of arms."

Marshall B. Bennett

---

## IMPACT:

First off, my name is Jennifer Thompson and I stumbled upon your website ([impactpress.com](http://impactpress.com)) after some online research concerning population control.

I typed in "population control" during a search on Yahoo and it brought several different sites with opposing views to yours ("*Population Control: How Many Are Too Many?*", Issue #19, Feb/Mar '99). I am starting to believe that the redistribution of food and money among the 'Third World' countries would be more advantageous to them than population control. Why do the governments of European and US countries care so much about population control in these foreign countries? The history of Europe and the US is not one of philanthropy, but one of war. Several billions of dollars have been spent on family planning initiatives in these less developed countries and insidious ways of controlling their population have been in-

troduced in the name of "health care" such as sending hCG laced tetanus vaccines given only to childbearing age women. The vaccine has the ability to make the body abort its own pregnancy by creating anti-hCG bodies. hCG is a hormone that tells the female body to prepare itself for carrying a baby when pregnancy occurs. It is what is tested for in most off-the-shelf pregnancy tests.

If world history is checked, European and US imperialism is the main reason why these so-called "Third World" countries suffer from poverty, hunger, and poor healthcare. Because European descendants are not reproducing themselves as quickly as other races are, the European and US countries feel that the rapid population of underdeveloped countries may pose a threat to the power hold that Europe and the US currently have on the world. While the UNFPA, The World Bank, and Planned Parenthood are pushing for 'family planning' and reduction of children in Third World countries, initiatives are being taken in Europe to increase family size. Why is that?

Your page states that overpopulation is really not the cause for the world hunger existing right now. You admit that better food distribution would eliminate world hunger. We are living in a time where there is an abundance of food. So why the push for population control? If less children are had by people living in poverty, will that eliminate the poverty of the country? No, better education, healthcare, and employment would do that irrespective of how many children a family has.

Population control has been veiled under many names such as 'family planning', 'reproductive health', 'reproductive choice', etc. but these countries and their women aren't being given a choice because propaganda from the West is literally being forced down these countries' governments' throats. Why is that?

How are environmental problems related

to population control? I believe that the corporations and countries raiding our earth in the name of greed, money, and power are more the culprit in our poor environmental state than a family who has four children instead of one. The propaganda of population control has been spoken and expressed so forcibly for the last fifty or more years that it is now mixed in with other environmental rhetoric and is being seen as 'truth'. But there has been no proof. Proponents of population control put the face of a poor, impoverished African family in our faces to make us believe that if that family had less children or better yet, no children, their lives would be better. But the fact is that their lives would really be better if they had more food, education, and money. Isn't that the case in our country?

Currently there is a program sponsored by Dr. Laura Schlessinger, a talk radio psychologist, in which women, predominantly African-American women, addicted to crack are being paid \$500 to undergo permanent sterilization. Wouldn't it make more sense to treat her for drug addiction than sterilize her so that she could properly take care of any children that she already has. If she were of European descent, do you think that such a program would even be contemplated, let alone exist?

I hope this gives you something to think about. The men in power are playing God with the governments of less developed countries because they feel that their rapid growth is a threat. They know that these new children will grow up to become the soldiers that will fight against them, that will organize against them, that will develop and uplift themselves economically to turn the power base against them. It really would be naive for anyone to think otherwise considering the Western world's brutal history against these Third World countries.

Jennifer Thompson



# Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

morris sullivan  
morris sullivan



Don't get me wrong—I like sex. I also like women, and think naked ones are just dandy.

As a matter of fact, one of the things I'm best known for is writing and directing a play in an adult club, casting women that make a living taking their clothes off in exchange for tips. And when they're actually in my play, they're naked a lot of the time, and there's a lot of sexual content.

However...

I seem to be getting kind of annoyed by the incredible amount of sex on television, in movies, in ads, and, well, just about everywhere else you look. I started thinking about this one night while my girlfriend and I were unwinding, looking for something to watch on television. On pay-per-view, there were a series of movies, each of which cautioned "nudity and/or adult content." On the premium movie channels, there were a dozen more, all promising the same thing—except for one premium channel, which was airing one of its variety of shows like "Sex in the City," "Real Sex," "G-String Divas" and the like.

On the History channel was a show about something like, "Sex in the Bible;" Discovery had a "scientific" show about infidelity or some such, that warned against viewing by children because of graphic content; and the network late-night fare had re-runs of cop shows with sex scenes, shows about cops busting hookers; and on and on.

Having spent part of our workday directing strippers to take their clothes off while reciting "Double, double toil and trouble," watching sex on television just didn't seem all that relaxing an idea to us. We switched on the news. "It's really starting to bug me," my female companion said, "that all the shows on television are about sex. And you can't see a movie without at least bare breasts."

"Well," I replied, "we spent a couple of hours today working on the show at Club Juana. Are we contributing to that situation?"

We thought about that, and decided we probably are.

About that time, we saw an ad for a network dramatic series about a high school. Most of the episodes seemed to have something to

**There's something more than a little seedy about adding a sex scene to a movie just so it'll get an R rating—and thus sell more tickets—or adding a shower scene so seventeen-year-old boys will come to see the latest flavor-of-the-week starlet's boobs.**

do with teachers having sex with their students.

However, I said, shows like "Real Sex," are pointedly about sex. They don't pretend to be about school, then sneak a little sex in to boost ratings. And one goes to an adult club because one wants to see something sexual—there's nothing inherently wrong with erotic entertainment, in my opinion, but there's something more than a little seedy about adding a sex scene to a movie just so it'll get an R rating—and thus sell more tickets—or adding a shower scene so seventeen-year-old boys will come to see the latest flavor-of-the-week starlet's boobs.

No doubt "Real Sex" was on our minds because we had spent a week with its director, making a segment about the play. I had gotten pretty frustrated during the

shooting because, as if there wasn't already enough, they wanted to add nudity. A week or so later, I saw a treatment that a Los Angeles filmmaker was shopping around; it was a fictionalized account of the story about the play. Again, as if there wasn't already enough sex and nudity, he'd added a (very fictional, mind you) bit about the playwright character taking one of the cast "under his wing" to teach her how to act—in exchange for sexual favors of the oral variety. That had pissed me off, and I'd thrown the treatment in the trash. It wasn't so much that he'd added sex that pissed me off, but that it was so damned predictable—and unnecessary.

We switched to one of the classic movie channels, trying to find a flick with actual dialogue. I think it was a Humphrey Bogart movie we ended up watching—one starring him opposite one of his signature blondes. It was a great movie, and it had found an audience of millions, managing to do so without a single sex scene, and without a single bare breast.

And since that night, I keep finding myself wondering: what if *The African Queen* had been made in the last decade? Could Hepburn have managed to keep her clothes on during that long boat ride? How about *To Have and Have Not*?

I suspect Lauren Bacall's line, "Just put your lips together and blow" would have a much different significance now than it did in the 40s. ❧



# Drug Legalization Now

by David Borden, DRCNet.com

## Former British Ambassador to Colombia Defects From Drug War, Calls for Full Legalization

Britain's former Ambassador to Colombia at the height of the US-assisted war against the so-called Colombian cartels has called for the full legalization of drugs. In a July 4 opinion piece in London's *Guardian* newspaper, Sir Keith Morris renounced the war on drugs as "unwinnable, costly, and counterproductive." In so doing, he joins a growing number of international political figures who have broken with prohibitionist orthodoxy, including the presidents of Mexico and Uruguay.

Citing his bitter and disillusioning experience in Colombia – "I believed there was a point to that war" – Morris has come full circle:

"There has been a cultural change which has led to the recreational use of drugs being seen by the younger generation as normal," wrote Morris. "It is now part of a global consumer society that demands instant gratification. Laws cannot change that. All they can do is create a \$500 billion criminal industry with devastating effects worldwide. It must be time to start discussing how drugs could be controlled more effectively within a legal framework.

"Decriminalization, which is often mentioned, would be an unsatisfactory halfway house, because it would leave the trade in criminal hands, giving no help at all to the producer countries, and would not guarantee consumers a safe product or free them from the pressure of pushers. It has been difficult for me to advocate legalization because it means saying to those with whom I worked, and to the relatives of those who died, that this was an unnecessary war. But the imperative must be to try to stop the damage."

Morris also questioned the judgment of US leaders when it comes to drug policy. Describing all of the suffering and destruction imposed on Colombia without making a dent in the drug traffic, Morris wrote: "After so much effort and many lives lost, the trade was still as great as ever. I began to wonder about the chances of success and also about the obsessive attitudes of our leading ally. My concerns were justified. US policy on Colombia came to be dominated by drugs."

In an interview with the *Guardian* the same day, Morris elaborated on his position in light of the ongoing shift toward cannabis decriminalization in Great Britain. "The government believes in what works," he told the *Guardian*. "Drug prohibition does not work." The 66-year-old founding chairman of the British & Colombian Chamber of Commerce added: "I'm encouraged that the government has started to relax the regime for cannabis. Now that the principle of prohibition has in practice been abandoned, I hope the government will start a serious examination of the best way of controlling drug use within a legal framework. It will not be easy. Hard drug users may have to register with their GPs and get their drugs on prescription," mused Morris.

"Some soft drugs might be sold under a regime like that used for alcohol and tobacco and, as [former Labour Cabinet Minister in

Charge of Drug Policy] Mo Mowlam has proposed for cannabis, they could be tested for purity and taxed," said Morris. "The revenue would go to medical research and greatly improve education and treatment. There will be costs, probably, initially at least, greater use and addiction and problems quite unforeseen. But the benefits to the life, health, and liberty of drug users and the life, health, and property of the whole population would be immense."

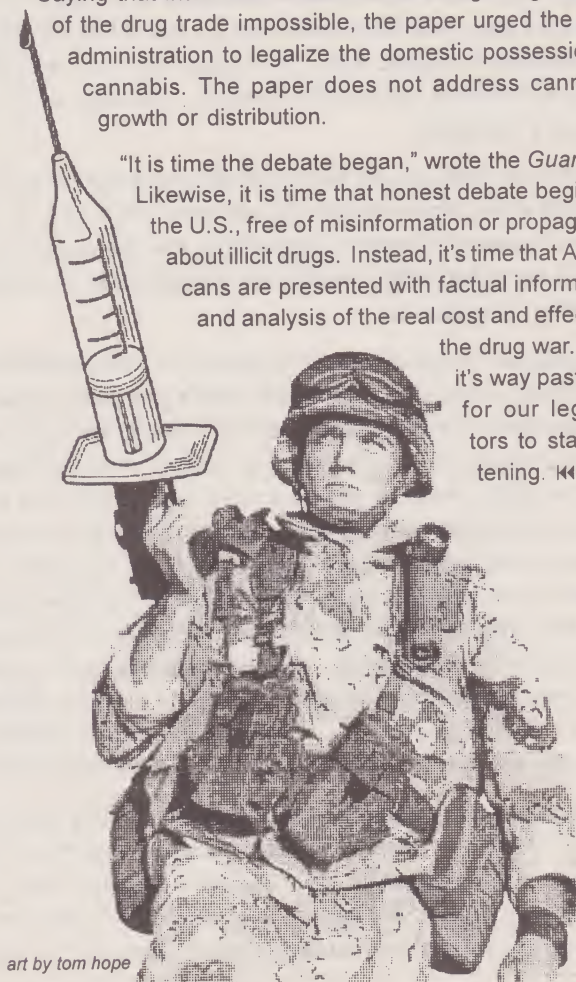
The *Guardian*, itself, joined the fray in a same-day editorial acknowledging the futility of drug prohibition and calling tepidly for change to begin with the legalization of cannabis possession.

"The debate which Sir Keith wants to spark will be welcomed by many people in the drug treatment world," said the *Guardian* editorial. "The international war against drugs has always been as doomed to failure as the domestic war played out on British streets. The criminal syndicates are too well dug-in, the profits too enticing, and the demand from consumers too widespread for effective criminal sanctions."

After reviewing the arguments for and against legalization, and expressing concern about rising addiction levels and continuing criminal enterprises, the *Guardian* came down firmly in the middle.

Saying that international law makes outright legalization of the drug trade impossible, the paper urged the Blair administration to legalize the domestic possession of cannabis. The paper does not address cannabis growth or distribution.

"It is time the debate began," wrote the *Guardian*. Likewise, it is time that honest debate begins in the U.S., free of misinformation or propaganda about illicit drugs. Instead, it's time that Americans are presented with factual information and analysis of the real cost and effects of the drug war. And it's way past time for our legislators to start listening. ◀◀





# Pill Popping

The debate over whether oral contraceptives should be covered by insurance misses the real point.

By Sara Rimensnyder

Women who have been struggling to get birth control pills paid for by their employers now have something that even the best insurance can't buy: legal precedent. Recently, a federal court ordered a pharmacy in Seattle, Washington, to cover oral contraceptives in its employee health plans. Failure to do so, argued U.S. District Judge Robert Lasnik, would be a violation of the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act.

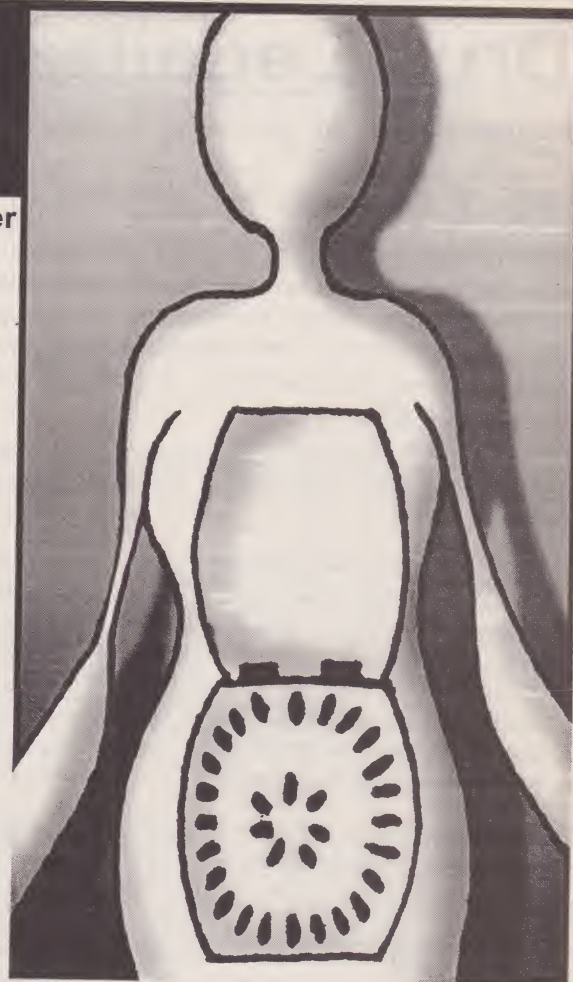
Whether or not Lasnik is right, the decision is an unexpected boon to working women. But the battle to make reproductive choice more varied and economical need not be fought in such constitutionally dubious territory. Reproductive-rights activists should instead ask themselves a more fundamental—and more controversial—question: Why should women have to get a physician's permission to take the Pill? After all, if it really is a woman's body, a woman's right, why do they have to defer to a doctor?

"Too dangerous!" say most gynecologists, when taking a break from the rigorous schedule of 15-minute breast and pelvic exams that they require for a prescription. These exams can cost hundreds of dollars, effectively pricing many women out of the market. "Too dangerous!" say many on the left, who demonize pharmaceutical companies as outfits that would just as soon poison consumers as help them. "Too dangerous!" say many on the right, who are uncomfortable with female sexuality, especially when unshackled from "nature's" strictures.

There's not much anyone can do to get conservatives to stop fretting about sexually active single women (or non-procreative sex, for that matter). But there's substantial evidence suggesting that the current prescription practices in the United States are far more stringent than any reasonable standard of public safety requires.

For instance, community-based clinics in the Third World have doled out the Pill without pelvic exams for years. That's not quite the same as over-the-counter status in the First World, but it's a step in the right direction. Additionally, in January, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit that studies reproductive health, analyzed data of a 1996-1997 government program that provided contraception without exams to low-income women in seven locations in central and southern California. The authors concluded that "participants valued the program's services, many chose to use more effective contraceptives than they had previously used and most kept referral appointments that introduced them to preventive reproductive health care." In May, the Journal of the American Medical Association published a study arguing that requiring breast and pelvic exams may "reduce access to highly effective contraceptive methods, and may therefore increase women's overall health risks."

Dr. Malcolm Potts, a professor of population and family planning at the University of California at Berkeley, argues adamantly that the pill should be freely available in any drug store. "Once the pill was beside Extra Strength Tylenol, users would know it was safe to use and begin to lose the misplaced fear many people still have in this method of contraceptive," he says. He also notes



art by eachear

that a doctor's exam can't diagnose whether a person is at higher risk of the rare side effects associated with the Pill. In fact, diagnosis is based on "one simple question: 'Are you over 35 and do you smoke more than a pack of cigarettes a day?'" Such warnings can be put on the packet."

Even apart from the issue of required doctor's exams, the economics of prescriptions reduces access to drugs. History shows that the price for medicine plummets dramatically when it becomes an over-the-counter pharmaceutical. This could make oral contraceptives—which today cost up to \$40 a month—far more affordable, helping even those workers who aren't insured. This could slash budgets at women's health clinics and substantially reduce women's out-of-pocket expenses.

As important, it would underscore a key point in debates over contraception: Women should have the right to control their own bodies. ❧

*Sara Rimensnyder (sara@reason.com) is assistant editor of REASON, a magazine of politics and culture available in print and on the Web at [www.reason.com](http://www.reason.com).*



# Trampling Our Right To Travel

By Tom Crumpacker

In the Miami Herald July 13 article "*Bush vows crackdown on travel to Cuba*," it is reported that Bush has pledged to "enforce the law to the fullest extent" to prevent "unlicensed and excessive travel" to Cuba. Why does our government want to prevent us from seeing and learning about what is happening in Cuba? It says its purpose is to deny hard currency to Cubans so that they will change the way they have organized their society. If so, it's the first time in history we've been forced to sacrifice one of our fundamental freedoms to implement a foreign policy objective.

From the beginning, American courts have recognized and protected our constitutional right to travel to countries at peace with us and our Supreme Court has repeatedly held that this is a part of the liberty we can't be deprived of without due process of law under the Fifth Amendment. Moreover, because travel often involves educating, learning and exchange of ideas, our First Amendment rights of free speech and association are implicated. As former Justice William O. Douglas once observed, "freedom of movement is the very essence of our free society, setting us apart... it often makes all other rights meaningful."

In spite of this, in 1981 the Reagan Administration promulgated regulations regarding Cuba travel which required a license issued by the State Department (permitting only certain limited types of travel, excluding business and tourist) and penalties for violation of concurrent Treasury Department currency restrictions forbidding the unlicensed spending of money. In a 5-4 decision in the 1984 *Reagan v. Wald* case, our Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of these restrictions on the basis of the State Department's assertion that Cuba had the economic, political and military backing of the Soviet Union, therefore the rights of citizens were overcome by national security needs. In the 1990's, when the Soviet Union no longer existed and our Defense Department had certified that Cuba posed no security risk, the restrictions were not being enforced (it being unlikely any judge would uphold them). Nevertheless, they remained on the books because then-President Bill Clinton lacked the political will to terminate them. Each year the number of unlicensed visitors increased, and the Cuban government estimates that there were over 100,000 visitors in 2000.

Last November, the restrictions were codified as part of a deal whereby Congress purportedly authorized the sale of some US agricultural products and medicine to Cuba. Although the majority of both Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate were in favor of doing away with the restrictions altogether, the Republican leadership in both houses refused to allow the food and medicine bill to be voted on unless it was tied to the codification. Since many were anxious to get credit for allowing the sale of food and medicine in Cuba (none has been sold because it requires cash up front), the codification passed. Republican Rep. Mark Sanford of South Carolina said his leadership had "behaved shamefully" and Democratic Sen. Max Baucus of Montana called the matter a "travesty of our democracy."

**It's the patriotic  
duty of citizens  
to challenge  
illegal laws and  
many of us will  
continue going  
to Cuba despite  
the threats.**

Whether codified or not, the restrictions are clearly unconstitutional because the Cold War is over. It's the patriotic duty of citizens to challenge illegal laws and many of us will continue going to Cuba despite the threats. US-Cuba policy is now increasingly the subject of public debate. This past May, 82 Congresspersons and 16 Senators introduced the proposed "Bridges to Cuban People Act" which hopefully, if allowed to come up for a vote, will put an end to the blockade and travel restrictions. It's now more important than ever for Americans to go to Cuba and see for themselves what it's like. Despite everything, Cubans are incredibly friendly to Americans. Almost all Cuban religious leaders and human rights activists oppose the US restrictions, be-

lieving that the more Americans on the streets of Cuban cities, the better the cause for a more open society. In the 1980's our government encouraged us to travel to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and it has been 11 years since another relic of the Cold War, the Berlin Wall, came down voluntarily in response to President Reagan's famous demand: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" It's now high time to tear down Mr. Reagan's wall. If our government can prevent us from going to Cuba, it can prevent us from going to any or all other countries. ❧

*Tom Crumpacker is a retired lawyer with many friends and family in Cuba. He's been going there two or three times a year for several years. He also works with the Miami Coalition to End the US Embargo of Cuba and is secretary of the Miami-Dade Green Party.*





# Autopilot

The threads of life spin fast and furiously. They weave a tapestry of enormous size, one so large that it's difficult to see any one person's contribution to its design without a scanning electron microscope. And the patchwork that comprises this tapestry is beginning to become extremely uniform, as the forces that weave it continue to combine at astonishing rates. Mergers and acquisitions proliferate in a race to be the biggest, baddest company in the world, one that can crush all who stand before it.

The unfortunate result of competition, the need to make your business as broad, powerful, and wealthy as it can possibly be, is the casualty of individual human thought. As international conglomerates increase in size and populations of countries spiral out of control, rigid rules and standards emerge, and this creates a generally accepted framework for the way things should be. Everything is slowly locking onto a direct course for a hive mind. The world is almost completely on autopilot.

Take, for example, news stories. Hundreds of thousands of people make the media run every day, and due to the advanced news gathering services that exist today, anything that this powerful network perceives as newsworthy that happens in the world can reach our eyes and ears within a few hours. And on every news channel on cable, the exact same news stories are broadcast in exactly the same order. To do it any differently would be to attract scorn and criticism from the industry, and to risk losing

your viewership based on a deviation from what they've come to expect. Even the local news has a startling homogeneity. One can see a relatively insignificant story such as a new basketball program for inner city kids at exactly the same time spot in the news program on channels 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 11. (Those are New York channels, for the curious.)

The autopilot is also apparent in the entertainment industry. When someone is being interviewed about a new movie or television show that they're in, or a new book they've written, you can see them in dozens of interviews about it within a week's time on just about every national talk show that exists. It is as though there is an entire subterranean network of acceptability that deems exactly when and where super-famous people are allowed to be heard, and what the not-so-famous people hear.

One might attribute this lack of diversity in mainstream programming to the ownership of ninety percent of the media by five corporations. I think it's something much more insidious than just a small elite of people who want to control the world. I think that the world is *already* controlled. The damage is done. We've passed a critical threshold where nothing that has the power to change the world and inject ideas into national thought is truly *real* anymore.

If someone has an idea that can revolutionize the world, they can't implement it and get it out into the world en masse by themselves. They need lawyers, accountants, patents, governmental approval, licenses, capital, copyrights, and a catchy fucking commercial. One cannot enter into the great fold of power without first paying homage to the hive. And by that time, it's been softened, hardened, hammered into shape, waxed and polished – to make it perfectly presentable to the consumer. And whatever's left bears no resemblance to the flame that ignited it all. The Ouija board made by Parker Brothers comes to mind. Somehow, conjuring spirits from the other side on something that says "Parker Brothers" doesn't seem all that mystical.

Our country's leaders are not profound philosophers, though you'd think that they are when they're giving a soulful speech to the citizens of Poland or the Ukraine. Those speeches, delivered with such genuine-seeming emotion, were written by a staff of writers who were paid to use picture perfect word choices and sentence structure. To do otherwise would risk leaking the truth, that our leaders are inarticulate twits who are good at reading off Teleprompters.

**The unfortunate result of competition, the need to make your business as broad, powerful, and wealthy as it can possibly be, is the casualty of individual human thought.**



Before playoff games in sports, rousing presentations and montages are set to awe-inspiring music that strikes just the perfect chord in the human soul. In every arena during sporting events, they play the same "Jock Rock" over the loudspeakers, they have the same battle cries, and they introduce the players the same way. To do otherwise would deviate from the practiced forms of crowd mind control and risk leaking the truth, that it's just a giant scam designed to sell you to advertisers.

The good news is that I think most see the control. They may not say it openly, but within the mainstream itself, there is a backlash—a self-mockery. People don't trust the hive that's rushing to adapt and feed them the wants that it creates out of the ether. They understand that political staffs "spin" their press releases and statements. Few people have much hope for the

world, for they know that there's something really, really horrible going on. They just don't know where to focus their mistrust—and so they blame other human beings, their perceived ideological enemies, instead of the larger force that's ensnaring us more and more.

And God forbid one should have a deviant thought or foretell doom and gloom... because we can't have passionate psychos running around our sterilized, germ-free world. To do so would risk leaking the truth, that the disease itself is what's making us sterile. Fear not, though. Life will find a way. Thanks to the obnoxious amount of diversity on this planet, there will always be people on the fringe, who look at the blossoming flower of stan-

dardized global consciousness and vomit in disgust. Hallelujah. ❧

**Everything is slowly locking onto  
a direct course for a hive mind.  
The world is almost completely  
on autopilot.**

art by marty kelley



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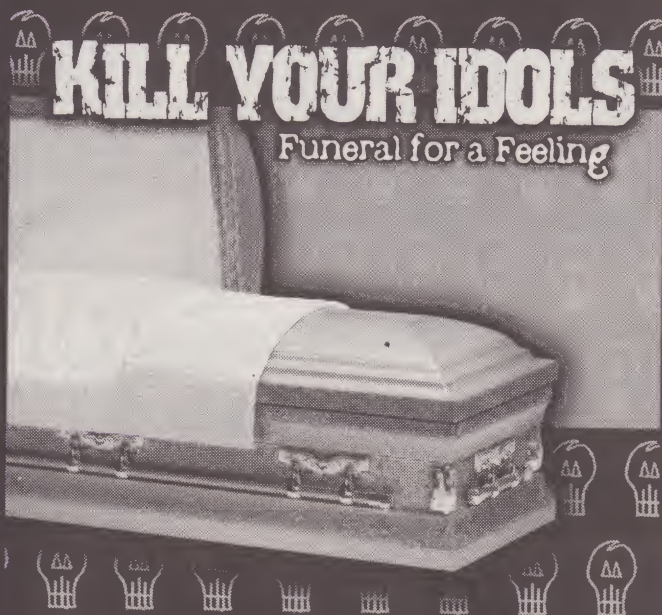
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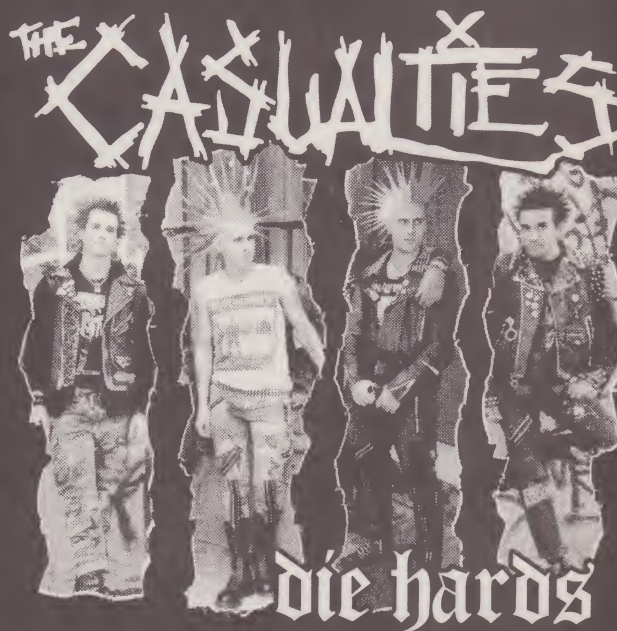


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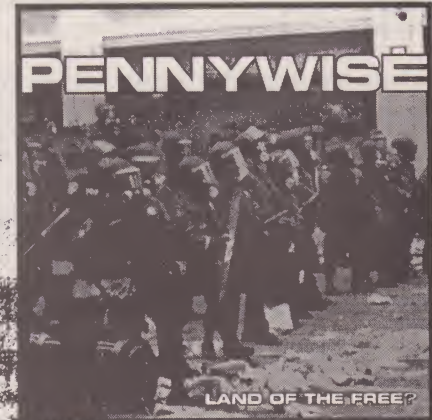
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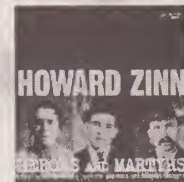
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Swallowing Shit's last show occurred June, 1997, at the West End Cultural Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Picketed and stormed by nearly 300 Christians angered by their smash radio hit "Pro-Abortion, Anti-Christ", the show signaled the end of an era in Winnipeg, as the band were subsequently banned from public performance by city council, citing an obscure and hitherto unenforced 103-year old civic ordinance criminalizing challenges to the authority of the Church within city limits.



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# "Animal Experimentation Is Good!"

How Industry Front Organizations Try to Twist Public Perceptions

by Jeff Nelson

art by Eachean Edmundson

Many journalists and writers around the world use "Profnet," an e-mail service provided by PR Newswire. They use Profnet to gather information and contacts for stories they're researching. Queries are distributed on the massive Profnet list several times a day.

While bona fide journalistic outlets will use this service to try to research and develop a balanced story, investigating all sides of a particular issue, the front organizations for the meat, dairy and chemical industries use the service quite differently.

**Consider how a typical Profnet query reads:**

"HIGH PROTEIN VERSUS LOW-FAT: WHICH IS BETTER? Need MD and nutritionist experts on both sides for USA Today article. Contact Joe Blow [joe.the.writer@usatoday.com](mailto:joe.the.writer@usatoday.com). No phone calls, please. Need leads by tomorrow 5 pm."

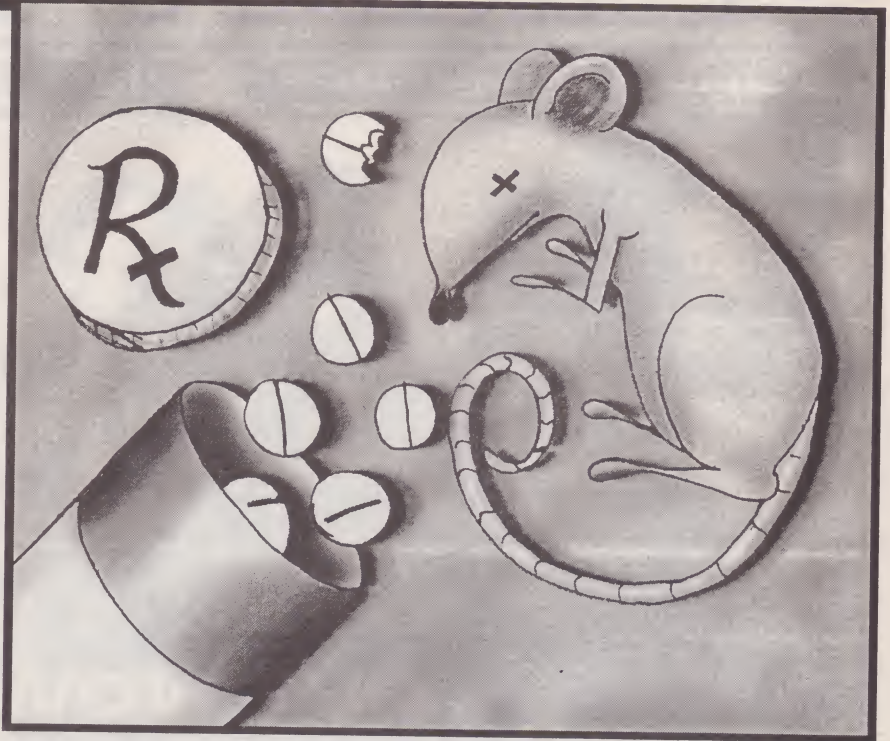
Once sent out to the list, any of the thousands of people who pay to receive Profnet queries can respond to Joe, and send him ideas and contact info for experts they think he should consider interviewing.

It's a great service; writers can get easy access to various experts, leading authors, and scientists on an enormous variety of subjects. And those experts have a chance to be quoted in major media outlets - and maybe get the name of their book or business promoted in print as a side-benefit.

In contrast to queries sent out by reputable journalistic outlets, here is an actual Profnet query recently sent out by a research group called the "American Council on Science and Health":

## **\*\*1. RADICAL EFFORTS OF ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUPS - PRIORITIES FOR HEALTH.**

I'm looking for critics or skeptics of the animal rights movement who can talk about the radical efforts of animal rights groups, e.g., threats of violence, the destruction of labs, the stealing of animals, etc. I'd also like to speak with an animal researcher or scientist. Priorities for Health is a print and electronic publication of the American Council on Science & Health. No phone calls, please. Need leads by June 15. >>> Nina Silberstein <[nswriter@uswest.net](mailto:nswriter@uswest.net)>  
Web site: <http://www.prioritiesforhealth.com> [hl::5/18:3422]



On VegSource.com, we have previously written about the American Council on Science & Health (ACSH), a non-profit "scientific" organization. ACSH claims to be a group of unbiased experts concerned about health, and vigorously promotes what it terms "sound science." What it actually is is another animal entirely.

And this is exactly the case with ACSH.

In recent years, a number of such non-profit fronts have sprung up, soaking millions from corporate interests in exchange for the non-profit's attempts to confuse the public about research which points to safety problems of various chemicals, foods, tobacco products, global warming, etc.

## **Both sides of a story**

Glaringly absent from the ACSH Profnet query above is the usual request for experts to provide information or opinions on the other side of the issue. In this case, that would mean seeking experts to discuss evidence that may support the case that animal experimentation has been a scientific and medical disaster.

ACSH will no doubt be successful in finding "scientists" to assert that we absolutely need animal experiments in order to discover how safe new drugs are before we give them to humans.

But they won't talk to a credible researcher who might point to information like the fact that the combination of fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine (or "phen-fen"), prescribed by thousands of doc-



tors to combat obesity, was tested on animals for years, and deemed safe for humans. But it caused heart valve abnormalities in people, and some died from this "magic fat pill." The arthritis drug, Opren, was tested on monkeys and came up clean. Sixty-one people were killed before it was withdrawn from the market. And Cylert, given to children with attention deficit hyperactive disorder, appeared to be fine for animals, but caused liver failure in 13 children before it was withdrawn.

Jerome Burne, the editor of the monthly newsletter *Medicine Today*, recently detailed in a report in the London *Guardian* how thousands of people have been injured or killed by drugs that were found to be safe for other species. At least animal testing can determine something as basic as whether or not a chemical causes cancer, right? Not quite — the results may be totally contradictory. The American National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences tested 392 chemicals for carcinogenic effects. But 96 came out positive in the rat and negative in the mouse or vice versa. So which of those are harmful to humans? The institute doesn't know.

They spent 30 years feeding high doses of a range of new chemicals to animals to discover if they caused cancer or other damage. They produced hundreds of thousands of pages of results. So how many of the substances they tested might produce tumors in humans at normal levels? The institute doesn't know. Well what about the ones that didn't harm rodents; how many of them might harm humans? They don't know that either.

The lack of predictable differences between animal and human reactions is something that has bedeviled AIDS research. There's lots of money available for AIDS research. And while many may believe it's unethical to experiment on chimpanzees, the scale of this epidemic urges overlooking ethical objections in using them, right? After all, the chimp's genome is identical to ours, give or take a few percentage points, so they should yield more accurate results than rodents.

But that turns out not to be the case at all. Out of about 100 chimps infected with HIV over a 10-year period, only two have become sick (the fact that chimps are naturally immune to this disease may play some part in this). Chimp vaccine trials have turned out to be

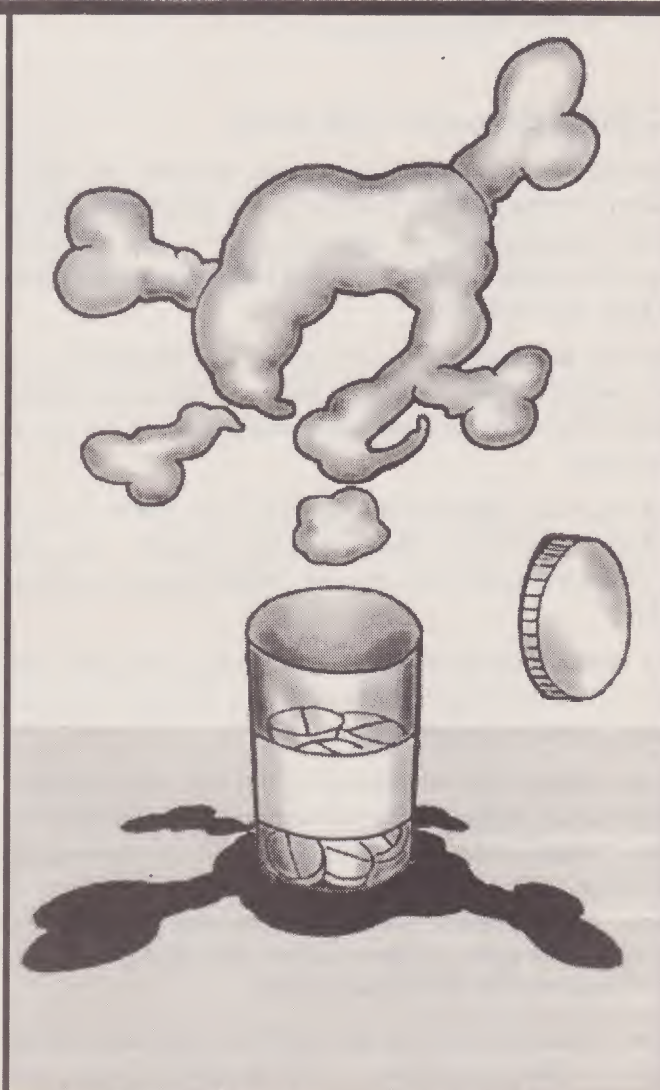
## American Council on Science and Health

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Source: Clearinghouse on Environmental Advocacy and Research, Environmental Working Group







**They spent 30 years feeding high doses of a range of new chemicals to animals to discover if they caused cancer or other damage. They produced hundreds of thousands of pages of results. So how many of the substances they tested might produce tumors in humans at normal levels? The institute doesn't know.**

unreliable as well, because they don't show the antibody or cell-mediated response to HIV that humans do. Animal experimentation has played at most a tiny role in developing drug treatments for AIDS.

Then there are the many drugs that desperately sick people could not obtain and use because they caused dangerous reaction in animals, such as beta blockers and valium — which were actually safe for humans. Legislation to stop the use of asbestos was held up for years because animals exposed to it didn't get cancer; the carcinogen benzene continued to be used long after clinicians were concerned about its safety, because it didn't cause leukemia in mice. And the list goes on and on.

### **ACSH: "Science" for sale**

When you know who ACSH is and how they're funded, you can be assured that they are being paid to write this pro-animal research article by drug companies or other corporations with a vested interest in promoting this topic. The query above clearly reveals that the writer has her orders.

Most likely this assignment comes from one of ACSH's funders who's feeling a pinch. People are becoming aware that animal research may not be the panacea that drug companies and others paint it to be.

So in response, ACSH creates a newsletter. They call it "Priorities for Health." Even the very name - "Priorities for Health" - suggests that whatever they print there must be critically important to health issues.

They start with the premise that animal testing is a priority for health, and anyone with opinions competing with their corporate funders' premise — need not apply.

It's very obvious from the ACSH query that they want to write a publicity piece, casting people who oppose animal research as villains. The point of the article will be to assert, as the query does, that people opposed to animal experimentation are dangerous zealots, "radical," "violent," "thieves" who "threaten" and "destroy," according to the query, and who therefore must be devoid of any rational arguments to defend their position.

In other words, the article will state that there really are no good arguments against animal tests - while steadfastly avoiding any

real discussion of what those arguments might be.

Any scientists they'll quote - you know, the kind who put electrodes into cats' brains or commit other atrocities which they would otherwise get arrested for if they did them outside of a laboratory - these will be the "good guys."

We predict that ACSH will not disclose in their article that lab animal theft or violence against animal researchers is actually exceedingly rare. There are many more people doing animal experiments than are breaking into labs, and only a minuscule number of the people who are concerned about animal testing ever do anything violent or criminal.

Once this article has been finished and published by ACSH, they will no doubt put out a press release, and sites like DrKoop.com and others that are in on the corporate payola schemes will run the piece as though it's real. Maybe they'll get lucky and CNN or CBS will mention it. If that happens, the drug companies will have really gotten their monies worth from ACSH.

The truth is, ACSH doesn't really feel that people are going to be harmed if animal testing stops. It's that their own bottom line may be harmed if they don't write an article protecting their source of funding. "Meat, dairy, pesticides, and processed foods are all good for us," ACSH will dutifully assert, "and anyone who disputes this notion is a radical, violent thief."

ACSH's "priorities for health" are not the health of people — but the health of their own financial interests, which they put first. ❧

*Jeff Nelson is founder of VegSource.com, the most popular vegetarian web site on the Internet. Visit VegSource.com for the latest news, recipes for vegans and vegetarians, discussion boards and much more.*

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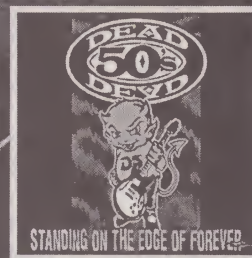
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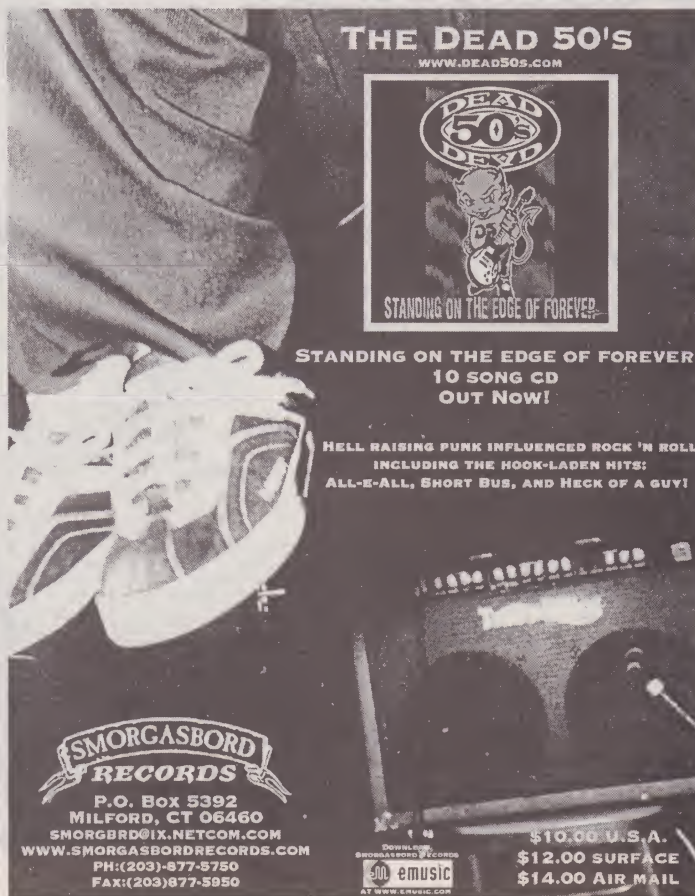
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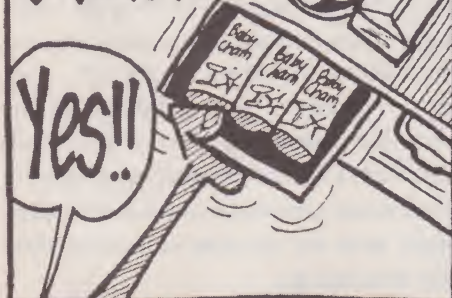
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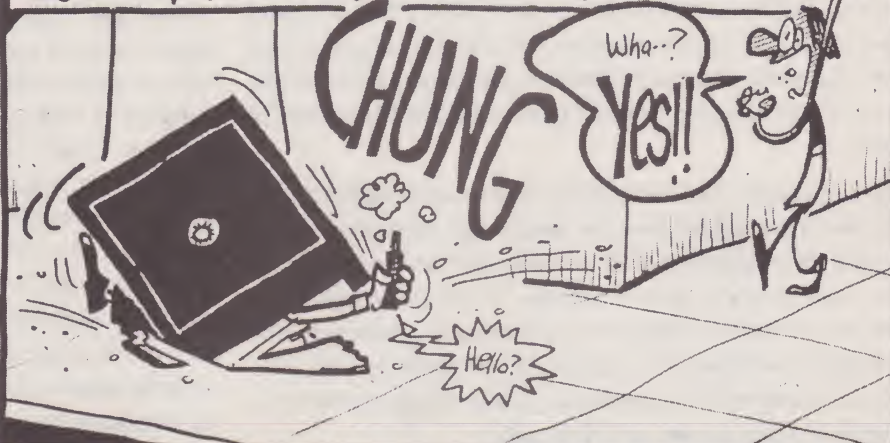
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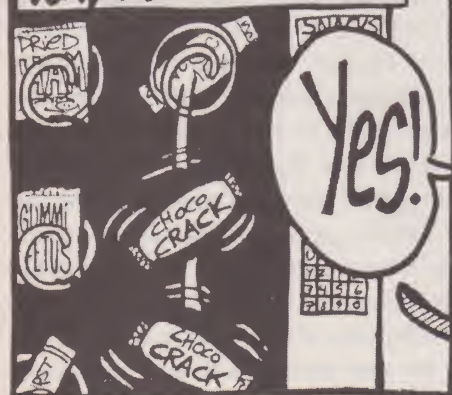
#395: YOU OPEN THE CRISPER & FIND A SIX-PACK YOU HID FROM YOUR ALCOHOLIC ROOMMATES WEEKS AGO...



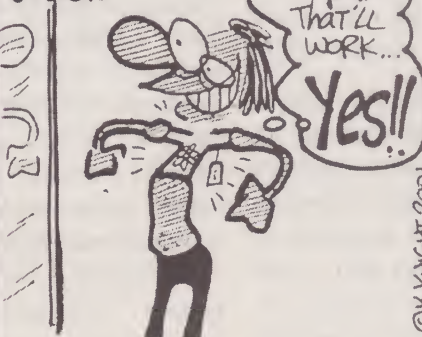
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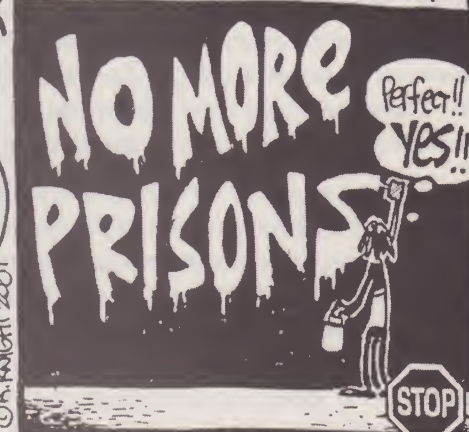
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# Across the Great Divide:

## The Wealth Gap Challenges American Ideals

by Molly LanzaRotta

**IS AN OUTDATED SELF-IMAGE KEEPING AMERICANS IN DENIAL** about the growing economic divide in the United States? Even though President Bush's tax cuts will leave greater numbers of us peering across a chasm-like wealth gap, some of our ideas about America—the land of equality and the “level playing field,” self-made wealth and meritocracy—can keep us from recognizing changes in the landscape.

I'm not saying we're naïve. Sure, we noticed over the past couple of decades that the economic equation of the American dream seemed to be changing—but not to what extent. The final years of the twentieth century saw the fortunes of Americans grow apart, in dramatic contrast to the three decades following World War II, when families in every income bracket saw their incomes double. But in the years from 1979 to 1998, those in the top fifth of income gained 38 percent while the bottom fifth lost five percent of real income. Today, the financial wealth of the top one percent of households in America exceeds the combined wealth of the bottom 95 percent.

We've responded to record-breaking income disparities by enacting a tax cut that will increase the wealth gap. The richest 1% of taxpayers will receive 38% of \$1.34 trillion over ten years, while 34 million Americans will receive nothing. In the gilded era of the 1920s, the last time the richest 1% of Americans owned over 40% of the wealth, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis warned, “We can have democracy in this country or great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.”

The current reality is that the wealth is ending up in fewer and fewer hands. For the majority of U.S. households, the real story of the 1990s was not an expanding stock portfolio, but the plummeting of personal savings, stagnating wages, longer work hours, and the escalation of consumer debt. Stock ownership remained confined to half of American households, with most of the benefits of the soaring stock market going to those in the top ten percent of wealth. Economist Robert Frank reports that the top one percent captured 70 percent of all earnings growth since the mid-1970's.

Meanwhile, most of us saw our savings and incomes erode even as our debt and work hours increased. For the first time since the Great Depression, the national savings rate turned negative in 1999. Total consumer debt hit a record \$1.54 trillion in January, 2001. The after-tax income flowing to the middle 60 percent of households in 1999 was the lowest recorded since 1977. Even so, the work year expanded by 184 hours over the past three decades, an additional four and a half weeks on the job for the same or less pay, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

An extreme example of the growth of the wealth gap is found in the wage gap between executives and workers. While the average worker's pay in 2000 was lower than in 1980, adjusting for inflation, CEO pay was 10 times higher. In 1999, CEOs made 458 times as much as production and non-supervisory workers. If minimum wage had risen during the 1990s as rapidly as CEO pay, it would have been \$24.13 an hour by 1999 instead of \$5.15. Less in the realm of fantasy, if wages had at least kept pace with productivity, which rose 46.5 percent from 1973 to 1998, the median wage would have risen to \$17.27 an hour, rather than \$11.29, giving \$12,438 more a year to full-time workers.

So why are we complacent or in denial about what is no longer just a gap between rich and poor, but rather an ever-widening gap between the mega-rich and everyone else? While we condemn welfare and cut social programs, why isn't there more outrage about corporate welfare and excesses? During the tax debates in Congress, a Wall Street Journal reporter called the offices of Responsible Wealth, which led the fight against repealing the estate tax. The reporter's question: “Why is blocking repeal of the estate tax such a hard sell? It would only benefit the top 2% of the most wealthy people. This is a no brainer!” The fact that this 2% and their money wield an enormous amount of power is key in understanding how policies with such a narrow constituency get sold to the general public. The voice and perspective of wealthy individuals have become dominant, while the concerns of ordinary working Americans have been drowned out.

Still, there are signs of growing awareness of the discrepancies between the widely heralded prosperity of the nineties and a less-than-prosperous reality among groups who didn't gain from the boom. Four in ten people interviewed for a June 2001 Pew Research Center poll believe that we are a have/have not society, compared to just 26% who felt that way in 1988 when the previous decade's boom was coming to a close. The poll also indicated that women and minorities are leading a trend of rising dissatisfaction with the country's direction. This is not surprising since the income gap between Caucasians on the one hand and African Americans and Latinos on the other has actually increased since 1947. And while the wage/gender gap has narrowed over the past 20 years, about 60% of that change is due to the decline in men's wages. “Aside from their income,” the poll reports, “there is one defining characteristic which unifies financially strapped Americans, and that is their recognition of the precariousness of their position.” Inadvertently, the new tax cuts, with their undisguised benefits for the wealthy, may further raise public awareness of the wealth gap.



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art by eachan

**If wages had at least kept pace with productivity, which rose 46.5 percent from 1973 to 1998, the median wage would have risen to \$17.27 an hour, rather than \$11.29, giving \$12,438 more a year to full-time workers.**

Some economists, however, question the wisdom of letting extremes take their course. Lester Thurow, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wonders: "How does one put together a democracy based on the concept of equality while running an economy with ever greater degrees of economic inequality?" In light of the current priorities in Washington, it seems our society may move much farther along the continuum toward inequality. But, as Thurow points out, "It is a stupid society that runs an experiment to see where its breaking points are."

It has been dangerous to hold on to our thoroughly American idea that people's economic circumstances directly reflect their character and industriousness. We have not wanted to acknowledge that the American experiment may be failing; however, the rules of the economy have changed. There has been a clear power shift as corporations and large asset owners have influenced tax laws and trade, monetary, and labor policies to benefit investors rather than workers and consumers. Simultaneously, the decline of organized labor and other community organizations has led to a loss of clout, and a loss of money, for ordinary working people.

If we are to continue to take pride in historically American ideals, then we need to be sure those ideals correspond to the present reality. Most of our beliefs about what makes America unique will be relegated to memory if the trends of growing economic inequality aren't faced and challenged. "My grandfathers fled European serfdom to become self-employed farmers," Iowa farmer Robert Rohwer told reporters in Washington, D.C., during the recent Senate debate on the Bush tax cut. "Their achievement is threatened

far more by concentration of wealth than by the estate tax."

The dangerous polarization of the American economy needs to be countered by shared prosperity policies that will reduce wage and wealth inequalities. Raising the minimum wage, expanding home ownership opportunity and establishing universal savings programs would help to close the wealth gap. Unfortunately, President Bush's tax plan heads in the opposite direction and will only widen our country's economic divide. During another era of disparity, Franklin Roosevelt's views about economic justice were considered so central to his presidency that they are carved in stone on his monument in Washington, D.C.: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." What words will we carve on George W. Bush's monument? ❧

*Molly Lanzaotta is a writer for United for a Fair Economy.*

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## Rejected By PBS (Again!)

### The wail Of the American independent filmmaker

By Danny Schechter  
art by Tom Hope

In his new book *The Place of Media Power*, about how ordinary people intersect with the media, London School of Economics lecturer Nick Couldry talks about the elation one video activist shared with him at getting footage on the air and thus "manipulating the media." Couldry was pleased that other voices were being seen, but also remarked that in seeking airtime, the activist "unwittingly reconfirms" the media's symbolic power.

I don't see it that way. I am a media critic who is also a media maker, anxious to blast some holes in the media system for more diverse work to be seen, including my own. And like many independent filmmakers in an environment characterized by so much homogenization and the disappearance of what some programmers used to call "dissenting documentaries," it's not so easy. Commercial pressures have not only tightened things up at the big networks, they've affected noncommercial broadcasters like America's Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

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"PBS has been forced to rely increasingly on corporate sponsorship and support in Congress from across the political spectrum. The more PBS is perceived as promoting programming of the left, such as labor history, the less certain it is to receive the support of the right." — Fred Glass, documentary filmmaker, whose *"Building the House They Lived In,"* chronicles the California labor movement's successful fight for fair employment practices in the 1950s can be seen on the "Ready for PBS" documentary tour sponsored by Citizens For Independent Public Broadcasting.

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Unlike many other countries where public service broadcasting is still strong, PBS in America doesn't offer much of an ongoing cultural or political alternative. (For those who don't know, PBS is not a network but rather a programming service that supplies a primetime lineup a few nights a week to affiliated public television stations. In other time periods, locally run PBS stations acquire, and occasionally produce, their own shows.)

Critical filmmakers like myself, who are shut out of commercial TV for all intents and purposes, need robust public television because it is often the only game in town when you want a program you've made to be seen. And you want it on their national program service, what they call the "hard feed," because that guarantees it will be carried by all public stations nationwide. If the keepers of the PBS gates turn you down, you can still get your show on the air, but you have to try to sell it, or more likely place it for free, on a "soft feed" that gives stations the discretion to run it or not. This can mean it will be on at different time periods, making a national promotion campaign very difficult. You have to lobby station by station across the nation like a beggar selling his wares.

### Politicized Process

The selection process is driven by politics and personalities and internal conflicts, prompting PBS's best-known producer, Bill Moyers, to tell me once that "if you think the war in the Balkans is bad, imagine what would happen if the PBS stations were armed."

Internally divided, uncommitted to any alternative vision and dominated by a culture of conservatism and caution, PBS opts for safe programs, even though some on the right see it as an outpost of communist propaganda. (Was it something that Big Bird of "Sesame Street" said or Chef Julia Child cooked?) Those false images, exemplified by slogans like "if not PBS, who?" clouds the real content of the their often tepid and frequently recycled programming.



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"The most frustrating part was the inability to even cross the fort, that is, to engage PBS personnel in a discussion, regardless of the outcome. Frequently, letters were not replied to, phone calls were not returned. Oregon Public Television liked the film but informed me that 'stories with a foreign element no longer fly' at PBS national. ... 'POV,' which had encouraged the project under the former director, didn't return my calls." — Kevin McKiernan, documentary filmmaker, whose *"Good Kurds, Bad Kurds: No Friends But The Mountains,"* can be seen on Citizens for Independent Broadcasting's "Ready for PBS" tour.

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That's why producers and critics who believe that PBS was put on earth as a forum for controversy and debate, a place to present ideas that get screened out by the commercial monoliths, have been battling with PBS for a generation. And that's also why veteran PBS producers Al Perlmutter and Jack Willis helped set up the advocacy group Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting, with support from Bill Moyers and others. CIPB is currently sponsoring a festival/tour promoting several current-affairs documentaries that were rejected by PBS, called "Ready for PBS." My company, Globalvision, produced a video for the group, in part because of our own experience in getting frequent turndowns for our award-winning human rights TV series. The story of how PBS once told us that "human rights is an insufficient organizing principle for a TV series" is told in more detail in my book *"The More You Watch, The Less You Know"*.

## The Pulitzer for Falun Gong Coverage

And yet, glutton for punishment that I am, I went back to PBS this spring to ask them to run my new documentary based on my book of the same name, "Falun Gong's Challenge to China". This time, I thought I might have a chance, especially after WNET, the New York PBS-affiliated station in the nation's number one media market, acquired the film and slated it to air during primetime (Tuesday, May 22 at 10 p.m.). It won many prestigious industry awards, as well as a weeklong theatrical screening, which is a big deal for a documentary.

Plus, the Falun Gong issue was back in the news, and *The Wall Street Journal* had just won a Pulitzer for coverage that made the rest of the media look pathetic. I figured with all this outside validation of the story and the film, PBS would be less likely to turn it down.

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"We were told that it might be best to find a PBS affiliate station to support our project, but we found that unless we fit into one of the affiliate's predetermined formats, it was unlikely we would find support there." —Barbara Zahm, documentary filmmaker, whose *"The Last Graduation,"* on the dramatic success and ultimate killing of college programs in prisons by the 1994 "Contract with America" Congress can be seen on CIPB's "Ready for PBS" tour.

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I was, of course, wrong, wrong, wrong. PBS did turn it down—for "editorial and craft problem[s]," they said. PBS rarely betrays political biases, but instead takes refuge in

the mantra of "editorial and quality" standards. Nothing is ever censored or suppressed at PBS. Those words are never used. Work that is tossed aside is always "not up to PBS standards." The situation illustrates the problems independent journalists face, especially because we invariably are forced to work with low budgets, meaning few celebrity narrators and not enough of the extra money PBS often requires for promotion. One of my essays on our experience with PBS was published in "News Dissector," a new Akashic Books edition of my collected articles. And just to show you that I am not alone, you can also read comments by fellow filmmakers on their experiences. Check out the documents and reach your own opinion. (You might want to order my film or book to learn more about the issue and to help a poor boy out.)

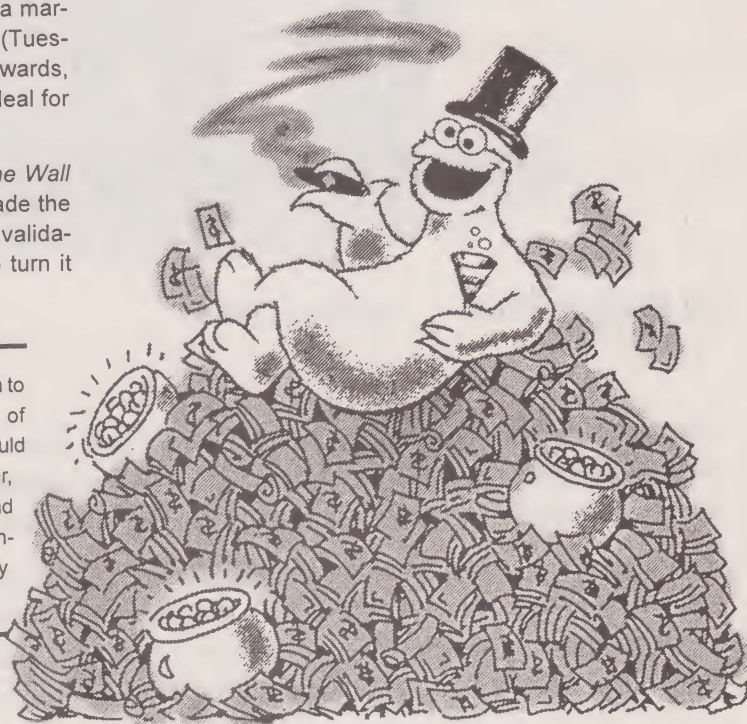
Happily, CIPB likes the film, and it too has been accepted for "Ready for PBS."

## A Pattern and A Problem

There is an ongoing and longstanding pattern of this type of exclusion. At bottom, these disputes are about politics and values, not technique or temperament. The problem is that for many producers, if PBS says no, it is hard to find anyone to say yes. It also is probably not a wise career move to question the process or—Big Bird forbid—protest, because then you are marked as a troublemaker.

From Prague to Poland, Bucharest to Helsinki, Europe's public service broadcasting is at risk of going the PBS way or worse, as demonstrated by threats of privatization and downsizing, prompting employee protests and strikes. Here in the United States, PBS is at risk of drifting even further rightwards. When the Dubya Bush administration is to the left of PBS on issues like Falun Gong, you know we are in trouble. ❧

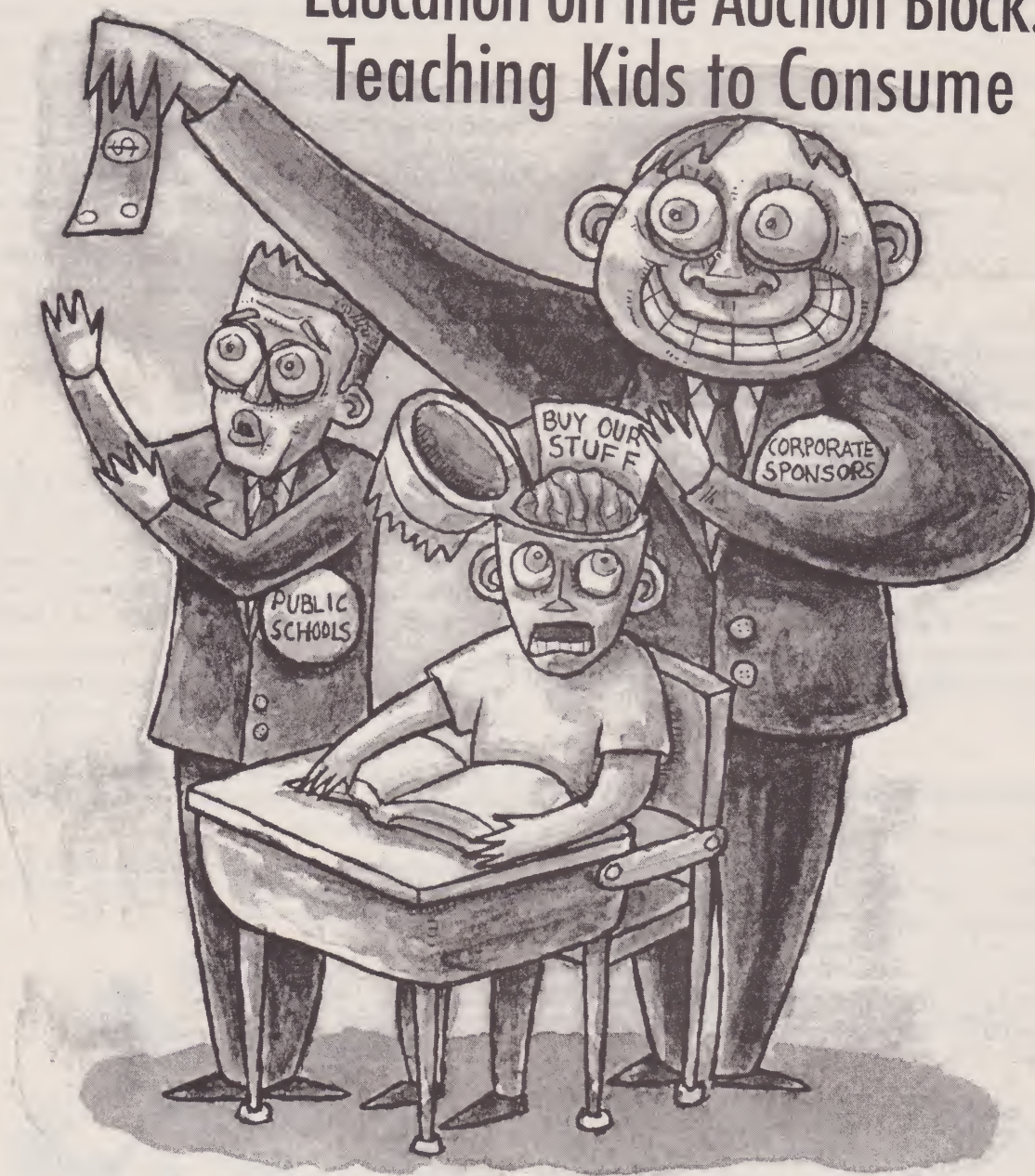
**Danny Schechter**, a TV producer with Globalvision and editor of *mediachannel.org* is the author of *News Dissector: Passions, Pieces and Polemics* (Akashic Books, 2001)



Viewers Like You?



# Education on the Auction Block: Teaching Kids to Consume



by Morris Sullivan      art by Eric Spittler

It's back-to-school time—time to hit the books and learn new things: how to factor an equation, for example; and that the capital of Idaho is Boise; that America entered World War II after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor; that “antidisestablishmentarianism” is a noun; and that Pepsi is better than Coke.

Schools have displayed and disseminated corporate propaganda for a long time. In the '60s, some accepted free book covers, printed with ads, for example. Coke and Pepsi have long been out-bidding each other for the right to advertise on stadium scoreboards, and everything from band candy to book fairs turned school kids into marketing devices, pushing products to help fund school activities.



**When it comes to marketing to kids, corporations have a simple strategy. They enlist the child as an agent in prying money away from mom and dad. That's why they use television time that parents don't watch, like Saturday morning cartoons, or put ads at the beginning of children's videos.**



From time to time, the practice of using American schoolchildren to help turn a profit has stirred up controversy; even as early as 1929, enough concern existed about corporate influence over curriculum to prompt the National Education Association to create a Committee on Propaganda in the Schools.

In recent decades, school budget crunches have driven many school districts to look for creative ways to fund their needs, and corporations have been quick to respond with dazzling deal-making. America's kids are a large and growing market; pre-teen children spend about \$15 billion per year and influence their parents to spend another \$160 billion; teenagers spend about \$57 billion of their own allowance and talk mom and dad into spending another \$36 billion. The situation was summed up in a 1995 interview with James U. McNeal, president of McNeal & Kids Youth Marketing Consultants: kids are "the big spending superstars in the consumer constellation," he said.

When it comes to marketing to kids, corporations have a simple strategy. They enlist the child as an agent in prying money away from mom and dad. That's why they use television time that parents don't watch, like Saturday morning cartoons, or put ads at the beginning of children's videos. And the most aggressive kid-targeted advertising focuses on the stuff parents don't want them to have—junk food and junk toys.

So while school budgets are tightening, corporations from soda and junk food manufacturers to tobacco companies are engaging in fiercer and fiercer competition for the kiddy dollar. The combination, in some parts of the U.S. and Canada, seems to have led to a marriage made in hell, in which schools and students have turned into easy marks for the corporate sales pitch.

The advertising schemes appearing regularly in schools are far wider-reaching than the old "we'll supply your school with free book covers, paid for by the ads printed on them" or "we'll give your stadium a scoreboard, but it'll have the Coke logo on it" deals. The schools, in most cases, get something more substantial than book covers—they may get a "free" computer lab, for example, or a "free" television set for every classroom. However, in some of these deals, students are required to watch television ads in class. In others, students can surf the 'net in the school's computer lab, but only visit "approved" sites, and only after seeing the ads appearing on the "approved" browser.

Perhaps the least pernicious of the corporate ad deals involves simply selling school space for ads. In 1996, the Colorado Springs

school district became one of the first to formally decide to supplement revenues by offering advertising space in its schools. They sold space on the school buses, turning them into mobile billboards and allowed school hallways to fill with posters.

Since then, more and more corporate dollars have worked their way into school districts, and several of the more elaborate advertising schemes and scams have sparked major controversies. For example, several Toronto-area schools started testing new screen savers on their school computers. The screensavers mixed motivational messages with pitches for Pepsi, Coke, Burger King, MacDonald's, and Trident. The district cited budget cutbacks as the motive for the ads, pointing out that they could raise close to one-half million dollars each year from the plan.

Lin Wright, media specialist for Florida's Orange County Public Schools, said that the district has avoided using its schools as billboards in exchange for extra budget bucks. "I can't give you an official reason," he said, "but we've never agreed to anything like that."

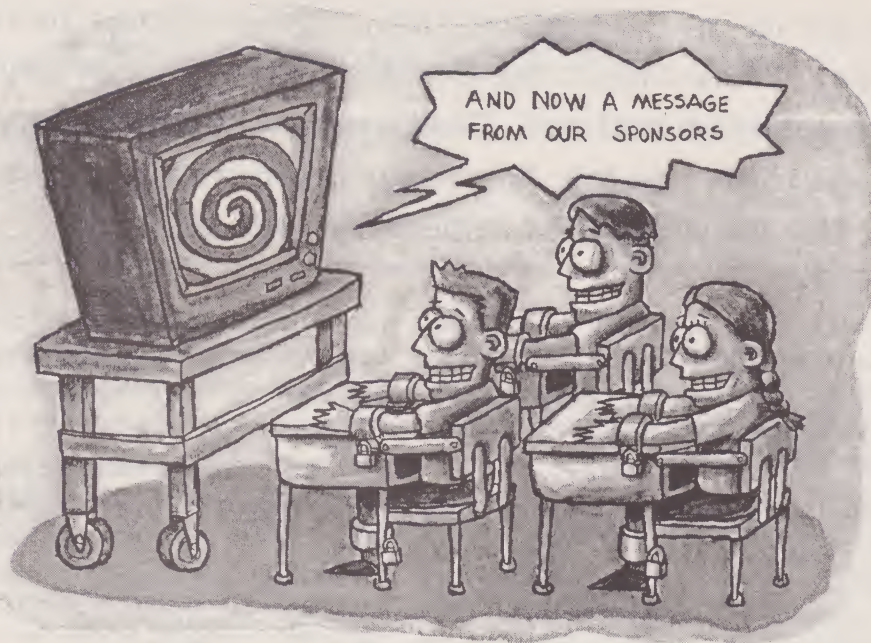
However, Wright understands why some school officials get in bed with advertisers, although he doesn't agree with the practice. "That's a real dilemma for a lot of folks," he said. "All school systems are strapped for cash, but you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater." Advertising to kids in school, Wright said, "diverts attention from the real mission."

According to Consumers Union, which publishes *Consumer Reports*, more and more schools are, as Wright said, diverting from "the real mission" in exchange for corporate budget relief. The trend, according to CU, comes from three main sources: chronic school budget problems, the growing presence of commercialism in society, and the competition among corporations for the growing youth market.

In a 45-page report produced by a study on advertising pressures on children, CU observed trends such as teachers using educational material and programs in classrooms "that are produced by commercial interests and contain biased, self-serving and promotional information."

The report added that there is increased pressure on educators to "form partnerships with businesses that turn students into captive audiences for commercial messages...in exchange for some needed resource." Consequently, it said, America's classrooms, cafeterias, hallways, and restrooms have turned into display cases for "licensed brand goods, coupons, sweepstakes, and outright





**According to a study by the American Academy of Pediatrics, "American children have viewed an estimated 360,000 advertisements on television before graduating from high school. Additional exposures include advertisements on the radio, in print media, on public transportation, and billboards."**

advertisements."

CU concludes that the trends "violate the integrity of education," especially when the marketing masquerades as educational materials. However, they warn, "when sorely needed equipment or teaching materials come only with an agreement to promote the donor's products to kids and their parents, it may be hard to say no."

A few of those "hard to say no to" items have included incentive programs by General Mills, Pizza Hut, and Campbell's Soup, such as Campbell's "Labels for Education," which urges students to push their families to buy their products. Sponsored educational materials have also found their way into the classroom, with products that would be almost laughable, were they not so tragic. Chips Ahoy has a counting game that has kids calculating the number of chocolate chips in their cookies, for example. McDonalds offers a nutrition lesson, and both Shell Oil and Chevron have produced widely distributed materials dealing with environmental issues.

Other deals schools haven't resisted include those made with Pepsi and Coke, who have fought over school vending machine markets for decades. For example, President Bush's Secretary of Education, Roderick Page, is the former Superintendent of the Houston Independent School District. While there, he arranged a five-year marketing deal with Coke. By agreeing to give Coke an exclusive on school soda sales and allowing them to advertise in schools, the district received a \$5 million commission on the soda purchased by the kids.

Page is not the only school superintendent to make a similar deal with a soda company; such deals have become almost de rigueur in some school districts. For example, some Portland, Oregon high schools have granted exclusive rights to Pepsi to market its sodas on campus. In one such agreement, Pepsi contributed \$17,000 for the construction of a press box for a high school baseball field, spent \$3,000 to upgrade the school's electrical service (to provide outlets for the vending machines), and pledged to provide \$2,000 per year in "support money" plus 40 cents for every case of Pepsi products sold on campus. Pepsi also provides \$4,000 per year worth of homework planners to distribute to the students; the planners feature the company's logo on the back page.

Many people think that all those bucks going into school coffers is a great deal. However, the incentive programs probably cost the students far more than the money brought into the school district. According to a British medical journal and other studies cited by the American Academy of Pediatrics, there is a direct link between childhood obesity and soda consumption, and both obesity and diabetes has become an escalating problem among American kids. With more than ten teaspoons of sugar in the average twelve-ounce soda, it's no wonder.

Orange County (Florida) Public Schools does permit some advertising to enter the classroom: student planners, for example, are distributed to students for free, and ads for local businesses are mixed in with the calendar of holidays and sporting events. However, more aggressive advertising that targets kids, like during in-



school television shows, Wright said, moves more into "kind of a gray area. Where do you draw the line?"

Some people draw the line at Channel One, the in-school television network. The brainchild of Christopher Whittle, Channel One entered the schools by offering them free television sets. In exchange for the equipment, the students would be required to watch a twelve-minute news magazine-type show almost every school day. As electronic media has grown in importance, many teachers consider television an invaluable teaching tool. Many educators embraced Channel One as a means of getting free television sets into their classrooms, and as one social studies teacher said to the New York Times, "I use it [to teach current events] because most of these kids will never read the newspaper."

Of course, no one gives televisions away for free, and the "price" of the TV sets and current events program seems small enough—two of the twelve minutes is devoted to advertising. And the value of that advertising was summed up in a statement by Channel One's Joel Babbit, who said of the company's strategy that "the advertiser gets a group of kids who cannot go to the bathroom, cannot change the station...who cannot have their headsets on."

Not everyone thinks Channel One's deal is all that great—at least not for the students who watch the required ads. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics published a statement calling for the control of advertising to children. "The American Academy of Pediatrics," it read, "believes advertising directed toward children is inherently deceptive and exploits children under eight years of age."

The study pointed out that, even before Channel One, "American children have viewed an estimated 360,000 advertisements on television before graduating from high school. Additional exposures include advertisements on the radio, in print media, on public transportation, and billboards."

Advertising to children is effective, the study stated, using Joe Camel

as a prime example. "In two recent studies," it read, "one third of three-year-old children and nearly all children older than age six were able to recognize Joe Camel." The smoking camel, it added, is as familiar to children over six "as Mickey Mouse." The ads are effective, it concludes. "Camel's share of the illegal cigarette market represents sales of \$476 million per year—one third of all cigarette sales to minors.

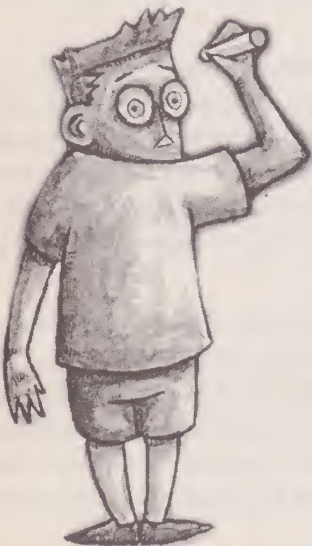
"There have been numerous studies documenting that children under eight years of age are developmentally unable to understand the intent of advertisements and, in fact, accept advertising claims as true," AAP continued. "Children who are developmentally unprepared to distinguish between advertising puffery and fact are equally unprepared to ferret out the 'as part of a nutritious breakfast' disclaimer on a sugary, empty calorie breakfast cereal."

Children are even less likely to distinguish between information and advertising when the ads reach them in school, the study concludes. "The placement of an ad in a school setting seems to automatically imply that the authorities on which the children rely for an education have endorsed the product."

The pediatricians' document also points out that the products most likely to be advertised to children are those they don't need, and that in fact are often harmful to them. "Television viewing has been associated with obesity," it says, "the most prevalent nutritional disease among children in the United States."

Since its inception, Channel One has been attacked by liberals, by groups of educators, by pediatricians, and by conservative groups offended by its advertising of movies containing violence and sex, such as its ads for "Dude, Where's My Car?"—a movie about two potheads so stoned they can't remember where they parked.

Others have attacked on the "diversion from the mission" basis, claiming that it takes valuable time away from education. The "news" presented on the program is of the "MTV variety," according to one former student, thus "hardly worth watching." Worse still,



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according to professor Alex Molnar of the University of Wisconsin and economist Max Sawicky, the advertising time alone costs more than the TV sets are worth.

As Molnar and Sawicky explained, U.S. taxpayers spend about \$1.8 million on the class time occupied by Channel One—12 minutes per day, nine days every two weeks. Out of that, the advertising alone costs \$300 million per year, which far exceeds the total value of the equipment.

In a strategy similar to Channel One's, a computer network company, ZapMe!, offered schools an equipment-for-advertising swap that looked like a great deal: the company would set up a fifteen-computer lab in a school, complete with Internet access. In exchange, the school would agree to make sure the computers were used at least four hours per day. Also, the school would pay the cost of insuring the computers and allow ZapMe! and its clients to use the lab after school hours. ZapMe! would retain ownership of the computers, but it would also maintain them and leave them free for the school to use as long as the school upheld its end of the bargain.

From the schools' perspective, the deal seemed almost too good to be true—and it was. ZapMe! had a double-headed hidden agenda; while the kids surfed the Internet, they would do so using the ZapMe! browser, which would direct advertising at them. The ZapMe! contract also required students to bring home sponsor information to their parents at least three times a year.

Students would also be surfing with ZapMe!'s own browser which would allow them access to 10,000 approved web sites, including Amazon.com. Jim Metrock of Obligation, Inc., a non-profit, child advocacy organization that has gone after Channel One almost from the beginning, attacked ZapMe! with even more enthusiasm when ZapMe! worked its way into public schools. The computer/internet service combination, he pointed out, offered 110 video games that students could play in the lab during school hours.

Worse still, the browser included in its advertising a link to violent and self-described "addictive" video games like Doom, as well as promotions for age-inappropriate movies. The approval of the web sites, he added, seemed to have more to do with sponsorship dollars than content. "I clicked on the Amazon.com link to order movies and simply by typing 'Playboy' came up with numerous Playboy videos that most parents would agree are not appropriate for children," he wrote.

Advertising and blatant marketing aside, the company's worst offense was its market research ploy—without the knowledge or permission of students, parents, or school administrators, they monitored the kids' internet surfing, then delivered to their advertisers the data they gathered, broken down by age, zip code, and sex.

After the marketing agendas of Channel One and ZapMe! came to light, several activists' and parents' groups allied to combat marketing in schools. Commercial Alert, founded by Gary Ruskin and Ralph Nader, began heading a coalition to eliminate Channel One

from the nation's schools. An ironic group of Naderist liberals and conservative organizations like the United Methodist Church, the organization has begun a letter writing campaign, petitioning schools to remove Channel One from their classrooms and asking legislators to endorse anti-commercial legislation. The controversy surrounding Channel One, fortunately, has hindered the company's growth and led to its restructuring. However, it is still in many schools, and trying to enter more.

And once the market research agenda behind ZapMe! was uncovered, an assault by parents and activist groups had an even more damaging effect on the company than did the Channel One siege, and many of their in-school activities were "zapped." The company has since restructured, changed its name to rStar networks, and repositioned itself as a satellite Internet service.

However, ZapMe!/rStar may still be up to many of its same old tricks. It offers corporations the opportunity to sponsor its LearningGate through its Corporate Adoption Program. The goal, according to the LearningGate website, is to "build America's largest Internet educational network" while offering their corporate partners a chance to "expand their educational presence on our growing network."

Partly in response to the ZapMe! debacle, a last-minute amendment to the Senate's education bill, which passed in June, limits market research in the classroom. However, with the Bush administration's pro-big business attitudes and its apparent support of voucher plans and other privatizing influences on education, exploiting the school marketplace is sure to become an even more critical issue.

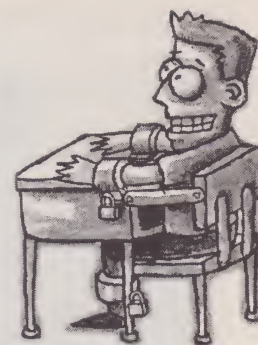
It is unlikely that Bush and his sidemen will be too diligent when it comes to protecting America's kids from corporate propaganda. Tobacco advertising aimed at kids has been one of the most controversial—and most lawsuit-riddled—of advertising genres. Bush's Chief of Consumer Protection at the Federal Trade Commission, J. Howard Beales III, is an economist mainly known for his defense of R.J. Reynolds and its Joe Camel campaign. David Scheffman, new head of the FTC's Bureau of Economics, also worked for the tobacco industry.

Ralph Reed was one of Bush's advisers during his campaign and helped him gain the support of conservative and religious-right voters, even while he was actively lobbying for Microsoft. The former head of the Christian Coalition, Reed now runs Century Strategies, a lobbying firm that recently tried to defeat legislation prohibiting market research on students without parental consent. He has also lobbied for Channel One.

There is an even more frightening prospect than that of exploiting children for profit indirectly by advertising to them. With Bush's privatization agenda—promoting the use of public bucks to fund private-school education and encouraging other private-enterprise forays into the field of education—the very real danger exists that our children's education will itself be tapped as a corporate profit source.



There is an even more frightening prospect than that of exploiting children for profit indirectly by advertising to them. With Bush's pro-privatization agenda—promoting the use of public bucks to fund private-school education and encouraging other private-enterprise forays into the field of education—the very real danger exists that our children's education will itself be tapped as a corporate profit source.



For example, the founder of Channel One, Christopher Whittle, left the organization after the controversy surrounding it hurt its bottom line. However, he has started a new business, one with the potential of becoming perhaps the ultimate kid-marketing ploy, Edison Schools. A management company which contracts to take over management of public schools, sets up charter schools, and the like, Edison is a for-profit business with investors who hope to earn a good return on their seed money.

According to analysts at Merrill Lynch & Co., which helped Edison raise \$122 million in its 1999 initial public offering, the company will manage 423 schools with 260,000 students by 2005, bringing it revenues of \$1.8 billion. Investors in for-profit schools have included such heavy-hitters as J.P. Morgan and Fidelity Ventures.

The Republican Party line has, for several years, promoted the idea that private enterprise is more efficient than government bureaucracy, and that private and for-profit schools could perform better on less money than public. However, one way they do that is by cutting back on administrative salaries. Another is by paying their teachers less. Certainly, an expensive private school might offer a better education than public schools, and some charter schools seem to better address the needs of small groups of nontraditional or at-risk students.

So far, however, no one has shown that for-profit schools can perform better over the broad spectrum served by public schools. Even if some do well over the short run as they buy their way into the market, the long-term prospects are frightening. What might happen when educators could begin competing for students using the kind of marketing razzle-dazzle offered by Mountain Dew commercials, or when their bottom-line objectives could drive administrators to skimp further on teaching salaries and materials?

One consistent supporter of voucher-supported private schools, John T. Walton, has also been a heavy investor in for-profit schools. Walton, the son of Sam Walton, owns a \$20 billion stake in Wal-Mart and sits on the company's board. In April of 1999, Walton invested \$50 million in a private voucher effort and urged the Walton Family Foundation to give \$2 million to CEO America, a company that supports private scholarship programs and lobbies for public vouchers. He recently stepped down from the board of a struggling

for-profit school organization and sold his stake in the organization at a \$1 million loss—after critics accused him of pushing school voucher programs to help fund his investments in for-profit schools.

It would be hard to support a claim that America's school systems are everything they should be, and with our growing dependency on technology, American schools will face greater and greater challenges in the coming decades. However, it is highly doubtful that the entrepreneurial vision that makes Wal-Mart successful—offering a broadly homogeneous assortment of stuff at bottom-dollar prices—could drive an educational organization to excellence.

The ultimate purpose of education is to help students become better at critical thinking. The ultimate goal of marketing is the opposite of that—to sell to the viewer stuff they don't need by making them think that they do. It is impossible to imagine that corporate profiteering could do anything more with education than turn our children into more placid employees and more trusting consumers. ❧

*Morris Sullivan taught English and Social Sciences at a central Florida private school for two years and now writes freelance for newspapers and magazines. He is perhaps best known, however, as a playwright—his "Femmes Fatale," created to challenge a Florida nudity ordinance contains the infamous "nude Macbeth."*

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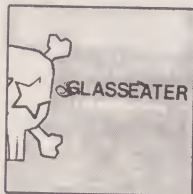
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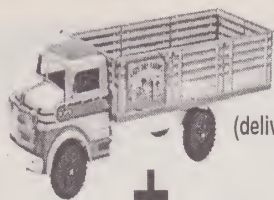


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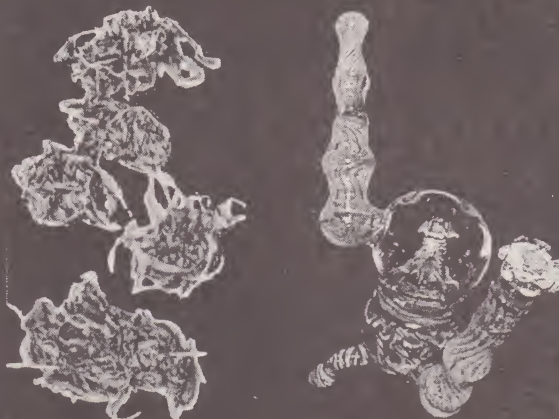
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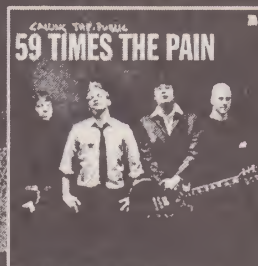
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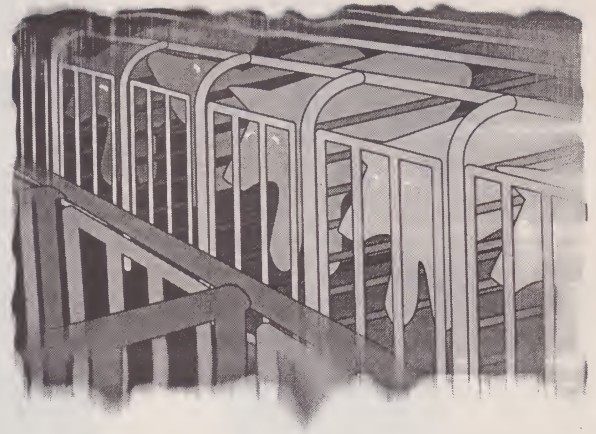


# Gestation Crates

## No Way To Treat A Pig

By Robyn Thunderchild

art by Greg Rebis



She can't walk freely in a sun-splashed meadow. She can't root about in the dirt, as is customary for her species. She can't socialize with others of her kind, or form family bonds, or raise her young in the manner which nature intended. In fact, she can't even turn around.

For breeding sows on modern factory farms, there are only endless months of confinement, trapped inside a narrow device commonly referred to as a gestation crate. Beneath their feet, slatted floors allow their feces and urine to drop down into large pits, where they collect until periodic removal. Toxic fumes and bacteria abound in the air, and sunlight does not reach inside the cavernous warehouses that serve as grim prisons for these helpless animals. With no regard for the comfort or natural tendencies of these intelligent, sensitive creatures, factory farmers systematically subject them to deprivation that is almost beyond imagination. Sows are impregnated over and over, and spend much of their lives locked inside gestation crates, which isolate them within the claustrophobic confines of the steel bars surrounding their immobilized bodies.

After giving birth, the mother pigs are then transferred to farrowing crates for a brief lactation period, then impregnated once again, and returned to the gestation crate to continue the cycle. When they are eventually worn out, and unable to produce further offspring, they are slaughtered. In most cases the spent bodies of these hapless animals become low-grade pork products, such as pepperoni and sausage. And so, a miserable existence ends in a violent death.

Beyond the physical rigors of gestation crates, there is, for these highly social animals, a terrible psychological toll, as well. According to an excerpt from a scientific report compiled by Farm Sanctuary on the welfare of sows in gestation crates, "the lack of environmental stimulation in the stall environment and the sows' inability to perform normal behaviors leads to psychological disorders including chronic stress, depression, frustration, aggression, as well as abnormal and neurotic coping behaviors called stereotypies."

In short, the extreme confinement and frustration of life in a gestation crate slowly drives these pigs into deep psychological distress, even psychosis. Chronic, manic behaviors such as barbiting, 'sham chewing', and aggressiveness are common. It is not difficult to imagine why these behaviors are exhibited; pigs have been shown to share many similarities with humans, both physically and in cognitive terms. When permitted the opportunity, they form close social and familial bonds. They mate and remain together, taking great care in the nurturing of their young. Yet in the life of a pig trapped in factory breeding facilities, all this is taken away. No wonder the prisoners of gestation crates eventually go mad.

In the relentless pursuit of greater profits, the animal agribusiness industry has stripped these inquisitive animals of every freedom and instinctive behavior. In order to counteract the illnesses and infections which inevitably result from such intensive confinement in unsanitary conditions, and in an effort to further maximize their investment, factory farmers administer massive non-therapeutic doses of antibiotics to the animals, making them gain weight at a freakish pace. Overuse of antibiotics leads to the emergence of antibiotic-resistant germs. These antibiotics are then passed on to humans when they eat pork products, and the result is the reduced effectiveness of antibiotics administered for the treatment of illness in the human population.

In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently expressed alarm that antibiotics have become 17% less effective in treating pneumonia germs in recent years. The CDC places the blame squarely upon the animal agribusiness industry, which consumes over 50% of all antibiotics administered in the U.S. today.

For the sows caught in this unhealthy cycle, there is only the monotonous isolation of the crate, chronic illness, foot and leg ailments caused by standing on slatted floors, and the certainty of an early demise. While so many Americans delight in the Hollywood portrayals of winsome, lovable pigs scampering about on various barnyard adventures, the tragic reality is far removed. While most



of us cannot help but smile at the thought of these big, playful animals rolling and wallowing in a mud puddle, the industry holds no such regard for them. In fact, one industry executive, L.J. Taylor, export development manager for the Wall's Meat Company, Ltd., in *National Hog Farmer Magazine*, stated nonchalantly, "The breeding sow should be thought of, and treated as, a valuable piece of machinery whose function is to pump out baby pigs like a sausage machine."

Another executive said, "Forget the pig is an animal. Treat him just like a machine in a factory. Schedule treatments like you would lubrication. Breeding season like the first step in an assembly line. And marketing like the delivery of finished goods." -J. Byrnes, "Raising Pigs by the Calendar at Maplewood Farm," from *Hog Farm Management Magazine*.

Still another, Earl Ainsworth, "Revolution in Livestock Breeding on the Way" from *Farm Journal*, remarked, "Estrus control will open the doors to factory hog production. Control of female cycles is the missing link to the assembly line approach."

Clearly, to an industry bent upon making money and unconcerned with the welfare of these living, feeling animals, it is all a matter of dollars and cents. The confinement, the diseases, the manic behaviors that set in after prolonged deprivation, are not considered to be reasons for concern. In intensive hog-breeding operations, life is reduced to the level of commodity, and suffering is not given any consideration. In fact, many in the industry seek to convince us that gestation crates do not represent suffering for the animals at all. In a major front-page expose on modern hog-farms by a *Washington Post* reporter ("In Pig Farming, Growing Concern: Raising Sows in Crates Is Questioned" by Marc Kaufman, *Washington Post* staff writer, Monday, June 18, 2001), National Pork Council Vice-President and veterinarian Paul Sundberg was quoted as follows: "Science tells us that she [a sow] doesn't even seem to know that she can't turn... She wants to eat and feel safe, and she can do that very well in individual stalls."

Such statements demonstrate the industry's ongoing attempts to justify to an uneasy public the methods currently employed in factory farming operations, including gestation crates.

However, there is a rising tide of protest against these methods. In Europe, gestation crates have been outlawed, as a result of public outcry and concerted campaigns by groups and individuals con-



cerned about the obvious welfare and ethical concerns raised by these cruel devices. Here in the United States, as more Americans become aware of the horrors of gestation crates and all that these systems entail, similar efforts to ban the crates are underway.

Currently, groups involved in humane farming issues are working to ban gestation crates in the state of Florida. The Animal Rights Foundation of Florida, the Humane Society of the U.S., and Farm Sanctuary are spearheading the effort to place an initiative on the 2002 ballot of that state, which if passed would outlaw gestation crates. These and other concerned parties have organized to form Floridians for Humane Farms, and are now gathering signatures across the state.

As a stark example of the alarming trend by corporate agribusiness towards the

commodification of life, disrespect for the environment, and callous disregard for ethical concerns, the gestation crate is a tragic benchmark of an irresponsible methodology. To a consuming public once largely ignorant of such barbaric developments, it represents an awakening to the horrors of factory farming. Few could witness the suffering of a sow locked inside this device without being moved to outrage. Perhaps, then, it is fitting that gestation crates serve as the cruel indignity which ultimately moves citizens to speak out against such practices, and to understand that the time has come to closely examine our attitudes toward, and treatment of, these gentle creatures who inhabit our legends, our imagination, and our land. If so, perhaps there is relief in sight for the millions of pigs waiting silently in narrow, cramped crates in warehouses across America. For only we can help them, and if we do not, they have no hope at all. ❧

## Make an IMPACT

For additional info on gestation crates and other cruel factory farming confinement, visit the **Farm Sanctuary's web site:**  
<http://www.farmsanctuary.org>

To get involved in the groundbreaking initiative in Florida to outlaw gestation crates, contact **Floridians for Humane Farms:**  
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# Decision Kills Pesticides Dead

Canada may be leading the way in chemical control

By David Suzuki

art by Eric Spitler

In late June, Canada's Supreme Court gave all Canadians a present just in time for Canada Day. The court upheld a decision allowing the town of Hudson, Quebec to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides and herbicides. The decision opens the doors for other municipalities across the country to consider such legislation, which would reduce their exposure to these chemicals and help build healthier communities.

In the past few decades, the use of pesticides and herbicides for cosmetic purposes has become ubiquitous throughout North America. They are inexpensive, readily available and easy to use. And because these chemicals are often mixed with fertilizers, we end up using large quantities unnecessarily, spreading them over entire lawns and gardens, regardless of whether or not weeds or pests are present.

But our reliance on these chemicals has a downside. Approximately 7,000 different herbicide and pesticide products are currently on the market in Canada, alone. These products contain hundreds of different active agents, a large number of which were approved before 1960, when their long-term effects were not well known. Many are potent neurological or metabolic poisons.

Only a handful have been fully tested for carcinogenic or mutagenic effects. In addition to active agents, they contain some 5,000 other ingredients, some of which have also been linked to cancer and other illnesses.

The pesticide industry argues that their chemicals are safe and represent little health risk. And they point out that few studies have implicated their products with illness in humans. That's partly true; the connections between pesticides and health problems in humans are not always clear cut. For example, more than 15 scientific studies have linked Parkinson's disease in people to environmental conditions such as working in the agricultural or chemical industries, or living in farming communities that regularly use pesticides. But there are no definitive studies showing that any particular pesticide currently in use in Canada can actually cause Parkinson's.

Proving a direct causal link between pesticides and disease in

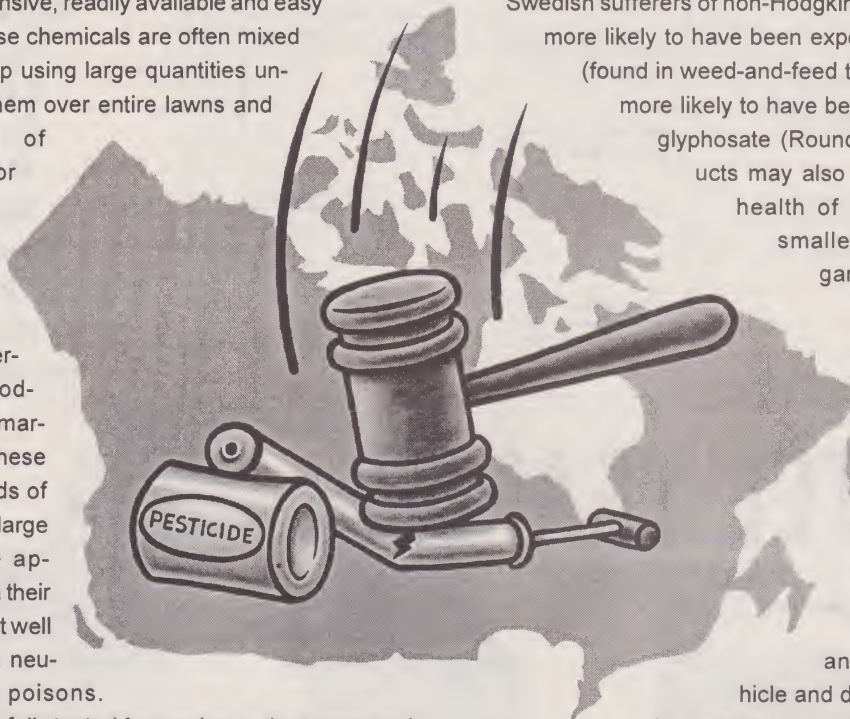
humans can be very difficult because there are so many factors involved. The amount of exposure to a pesticide, duration, combination with other chemicals, age of the exposed individual and his or her genetic predisposition all play a role. But there is a great deal of evidence that many of these pesticides, either alone or in combination, are involved in many diseases, including Parkinson's, cancers such as non-Hodgkins lymphoma (which has risen by 73 per cent since 1973), asthma, and others.

For example, two years ago, European researchers found that Swedish sufferers of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma were 2.7 times more likely to have been exposed to the herbicide MCPA (found in weed-and-feed type products) and 2.3 times more likely to have been exposed to the herbicide glyphosate (Round-Up). Some of these products may also be more detrimental to the health of children because of their smaller size and developing organs. A study by the Ontario College of Family Physicians last year, for example, concluded that children face undeniable risks from pesticide exposure.

Humans today face a barrage of industrial chemicals, from pesticides and herbicides to motor vehicle and diesel exhaust, PCBs, cleaning agents, solvents and others. We breathe combinations of these chemicals in the air, drink them in our water and eat them in our food. Yet when we test them, we do it individually because studying combinations quickly escalates into an impossible number of variables.

Given our valid suspicions, shouldn't the burden of proof be on the manufacturers to prove that their products are safe rather than the public to prove that they are not? People tend to associate beautiful, lush gardens with health and vitality. But with the increasing use of pesticides, our gardens have become a paradox. They look beautiful, but they may harbour chemicals that are decidedly unhealthy. A lawn or garden does not require the constant input of herbicides and pesticides to remain beautiful. ❧

**Dr. David Suzuki** is a geneticist, broadcaster and Chair of the David Suzuki Foundation. Through scientific research, public education and advocacy, the Foundation seeks to balance human needs with the natural systems that ultimately sustain all life. For more info: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org>





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the coil

50 minute (CD)

red martian

little hopes

13 minute (7")

red martian

sniffing glue

34 minute (CD)



red martian

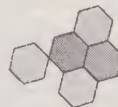
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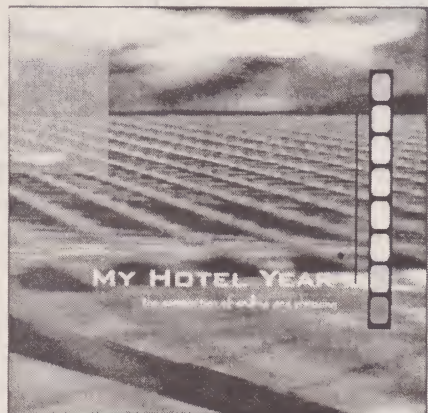
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# MINIMUM SECURITY



WIDESPREAD  
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by S. McMillan

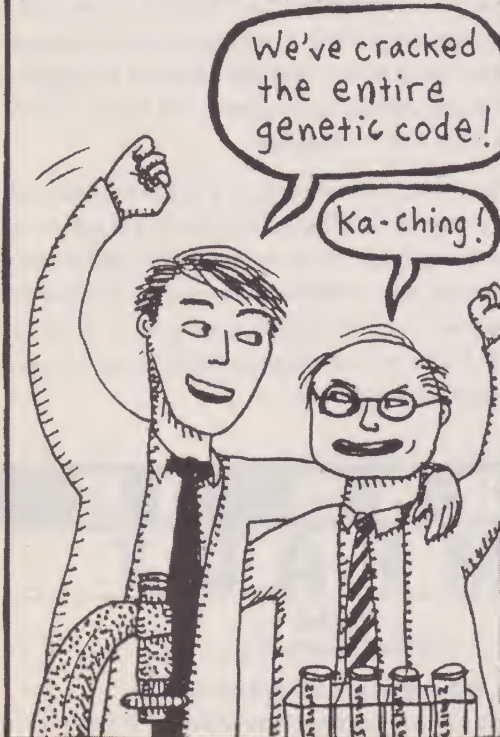
It's an interesting, hardy and productive variety of grain you're growing here.



As a U.S. scientist, I help people through technological advances in agriculture. May I take a plant to study?



BACK IN THE LAB...



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I love advertising. Without advertising, I would never know there was stuff out there that I could spend money on. The money I made would just pile up inside my apartment until I suffocated in my sleep. Advertising is a subtle reminder that I need to get rid of some of this money before it destroys me and my loved ones.

I'm referring to product advertising, of course. The "product" in question is the thing that is exchanged for money. They get money, and you get a cool new product. You can wear this product, hang it on your wall, or simply set it next to some other product you may have bought recently. The important thing is that you are now the owner of a product, and that should make you feel good. To amplify this feeling of sublime commerce, watch some ads that feature your product and see how much fun those people are having. Hey, cool product. Good job.

We all know advertising works. Even IMPACT uses advertising to pay for expenses. However, we seem to have forgotten that advertising can be used as a way to sell an idea as well as a product.

A recent news story told of a youngster who found an infestation of maggots in his McDonald's hamburger. This should be seen as a golden opportunity for all maggot advocates to use the power of advertising to make the maggot plight visible to the masses:

Narrator: See this meat patty? To you, it's a quick lunch. But to hundreds of maggots, it is their home.

Maggot (crying): All I know is that it got very dark, and then there was a lot of screaming, and then I couldn't find m' boy.

Other maggot: I don't understand what a person gains by eating someone's home, especially when it's a maggot home. I mean, look at us, we're fucking disgusting. I can't look in the mirror for more than three seconds without barfing all over myself.

Narrator: Over three million maggots are killed every year because of the meat industry. If we let this trend continue, eventually the

maggots will die out, and so will the fly population. We need flies. I think. I'm sure they serve some kind of purpose.

Cut to shot of Native American standing over hamburger, a single tear rolls down his cheek.

I'm not an advertising expert, but I fail to see the problem with using advertising in this manner. I've said before that I'm not anti-corporate, and I'm not, but I am against voices being silenced that should be heard. As a non-vegetarian, I welcome an ad that reminds me to periodically check my sandwich for larvae. I may never be able to come to grips with the fact that a restaurant chain run by a clown would allow such an atrocity, but now I know it is a possibility.

Slogans and icons stick in our minds easier than ideas, and when an idea is reduced to a symbol, it becomes cheapened. You see a lot of people wearing the Yin Yang symbol, but I'm sure only a handful know what it truly means. This handful of people would not include me, however. That's why I don't wear one.

The second you see the swoosh symbol, you think of Nike. If you've forgotten who made your shirt, it's likely that the company that made it has taken the liberty of putting their name on the front. This is where our culture stands, in a kind of corporate-sponsored quicksand that doesn't allow for the forging of new ideas or perspectives. Our vision is obscured by these symbols, and the intangible stuff that truly matters has to compete with this omnipresent force. According to a story by Dan Rubinstein on the Web site Altnet.org (see link below), word processors with spell check now include corporate names, which shows just how much they've infiltrated the lexicon. They're a part of our culture now, and while I once again must say that I'm not anti-corporate, I think it's a good idea to ask ourselves just how much of this infestation should be allowed. There doesn't seem to be a very thin line between a maggot in every hamburger and a Gap on every corner. We seem to accept either scenario without much hesitation.

Not everyone is an activist, and I don't think everyone needs to be. Just being aware of how advertising has infiltrated our culture is a huge step. The next step is to find those in-between places where human beings can once again communicate on a level that allows for real cultural growth and not corporate expansion. Once that common ground is found, we can begin giving all of our money to the Save The Maggots foundation. ¶¶

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BadAds

<http://www.badads.org>

Dan Rubenstein story on Altnet.org

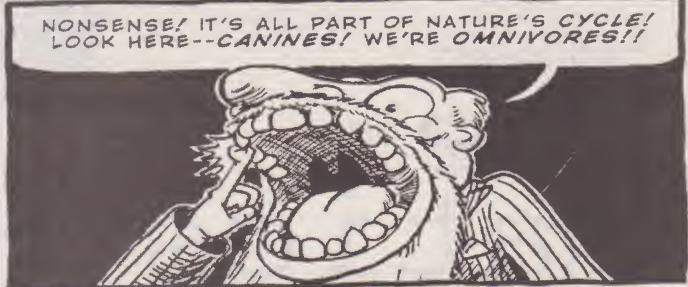
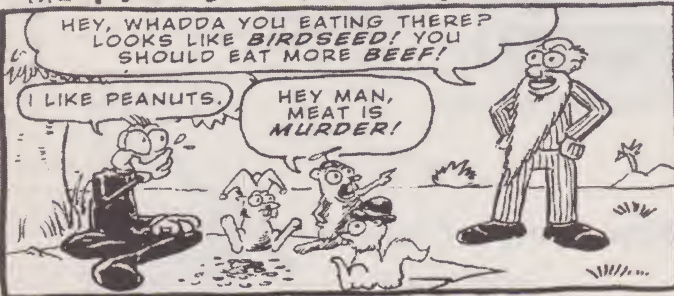
<http://www.altnet.org/story.html?StoryID=11130>



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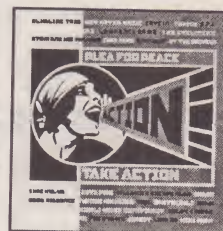
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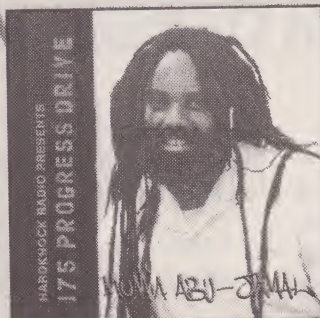
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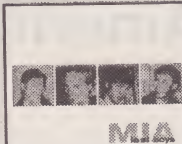
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# Bullet or Noose?

## The Illusion of American Democracy

By David Lucander  
art by Eric Spitler

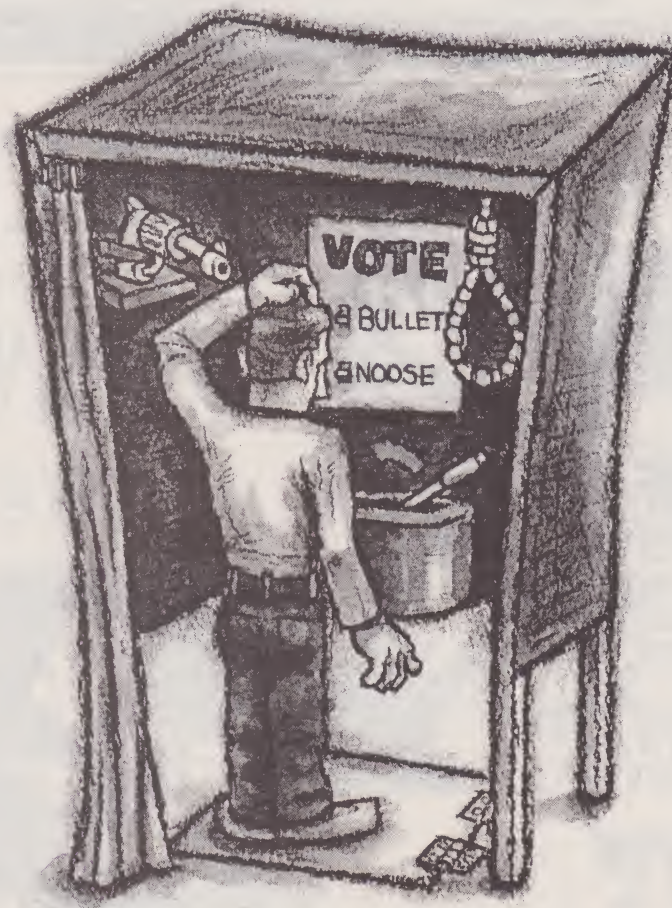
Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the western world gradually extended suffrage to women, the working class, and convicts (in the latter case, it has been revoked in most states). Nearly a century later, women still earn less than a man who works in the same profession, poverty is widespread, and convicts are still dehumanized and abused. It seems that the right to vote has not liberated the masses of people. This raises the question of whether suffrage improves the quality of life for the masses or acts as a facade to create the illusion that the individual is empowered over his or her own destiny.

It is said that voting is a necessary civic duty, and this idea is constantly reinforced by the popular rhetoric which holds that if an individual does not vote, then that individual forfeits his or her right to complain about how this country is being run. Some claim that the refusal to vote is due to apathetic masses who do not care about their country. Others contend that the masses are disillusioned about the effectiveness of the choices of representatives

on the ballot. Still others feel that if voting could change anything it would be illegal.

One reason for this is our democratic system. Democrat or Republican? Bullet or noose? Lead or arsenic? Are these choices?

The health of our representative democracy depends on easier access to elections for third, fourth, and fifth parties. Massive campaign finance reform can change this by prohibiting private corporations from funding a politician's bid for election. Under a new system, campaigns would be run only on public money; for instance, \$200,000 for each qualified party. The amount of funds would change to reflect the scale of the election on the national, state, or local level. This would result in a dramatic decrease in expensive political commercials, which often depict distorted statistics or a tarnished image of the opposing candidate. With fewer prime-time commercials to reach the eyes and ears of voters, politicians would have to flex their rhetorical muscles and revert





# Just as radical revolutionaries fight for their freedom with guns, we must defend democracy by wielding our suffrage as a weapon.

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back to old-fashioned debates. In exchange for their exclusive broadcasting rights over public airwaves, NBC, CBS, ABC, and FOX would all be required to air the debates and replay them for the span of a week free of charge.

The Electoral College, the system that permits a candidate to win the popular vote but still not win the presidency, must be altered or abolished. The Electoral College restricts access to politicians. Because it is a "winner takes all" system, Republicans rarely, if ever, give a speech in a solidly Democratic or historically Republican state. This is great for swing states such as Wisconsin because politicians grapple for the votes and make numerous speeches in that area. But it leaves liberal strongholds like Massachusetts, and traditionally conservative areas such as Texas, with few appearances by politicians. Can you blame them for bypassing a state that is a sure win or loss when California's fifty-something Electoral College votes are up for grabs?

Working within the system, we can modify the "winner takes all" policy in states to a proportional scoring model. Under this system, a state with ten electoral votes would award, for instance, two of them to the candidate who won twenty percent of the popular vote in that state. A more radical approach would be to completely abolish the institution of the Electoral College on the basis that it creates an indirect democracy where the people do not directly elect their leaders. Regardless of what method of reform is utilized, the Electoral College has hindered democracy for two hundred years and must be abolished or altered. Instead, we must institute a direct democracy where the people can speak through their own votes and not the votes of a faceless member of a college that does not even have a campus.

The backbone of the nation, the citizens, must be retooled for this grand experiment in democracy for it to succeed. Because the citizens are supposed to be the ones making decisions about how to run a nation, democracy requires well-educated and highly informed citizens. Ultimately, this requires greater funding for schools at the primary, secondary, and graduate level.

Grade schools could serve their communities through extended day and head start programs. Secondary schools could encourage improved media literacy and prepare more students for college. Because of increased federal financial aid for students, college enrollment would increase and access to higher education could be extended to a greater percentage of the population. It does not take a political scientist to see that improvement of high school education coinciding with a greater percentage of the population enrolled in college leads to a better educated citizenry that

can make more informed choices about how to administer this great nation.

One problem is that this educated and enlightened public needs access to quality information. This is a difficult subject because if corporations fund the media, the corporations have more control over what news is presented. If the government provides a bulk of the funds for the media to operate, then the government has more access to censorship. Who would you prefer your news filtered through, a multinational corporation with definite political interests or the government? Again we are presented with a choice between a bullet and a noose. A way to avoid this situation is to actively search out independent media. Nearly every major city has a free weekly newspaper and many of them do offer different perspectives than the local daily newspapers. Privately funded newsletters, magazines and pamphlets, despite often having biases, add another perspective of the truth and the significance of events.

Just as radical revolutionaries fight for their freedom with guns, we must defend democracy by wielding our suffrage as a weapon. Do not waste energy by simply shooting blanks into the sky; instead take a carefully placed shot at a handpicked target. Just don't punch the wrong hole.

If merely voting for your representative is all that you do to exercise your right to free thought, then you are taking this natural right for granted. Get out in the street and pass out flyers about something important to you. Do not be afraid to talk politics at the dinner table, stand up for what you believe in and do not be silent when injustice happens in your neighborhood.

The problem with representative democracy is that rather than encouraging true involvement, it reduces its participants to observers watching Electoral College scores on television well into the eleventh inning. And the game goes on. «

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**Open Secrets -- Your Guide to the Money in Elections**  
<http://www.opensecrets.org>

**Citizens for True Democracy**  
<http://www.truedemocracy.org>



# A Scapegoat in Colorado:

## How the Media and Police Have Taken the Life on an Innocent Woman

By J.C. Carnahan

art by Marty Kelley

In the United States, we live with a judicial system that leads us to believe that every person is considered innocent until proven otherwise in a court of law. But in cases reported across the country, citizens are left asking themselves if justice was actually upheld. Innocent individuals could be wrongly convicted and thrown behind bars for a crime they did not commit just as quickly as a guilty person could be acquitted and free to defy the odds again.

Whether convicted by a jury, the media or just by default, when an innocent person is imprisoned, fingers begin pointing. The police departments involved often face a multitude of questions.

In Denver, Colorado, one such case has sparked debate and raised questions about our justice system. There, a 22-year-old female was sentenced to life in prison without parole for her part in the November 12, 1997 shooting death of Denver police officer Bruce VanderJagt. The catch is, Lisl Auman was handcuffed and in the back seat of a police cruiser for up to ten minutes before the shooting even occurred.

Lisl Auman, apprehended by authorities at the end of a high-speed car chase and shootout, was the lone passenger in a stolen car driven by 25-year-old triggerman Matthaeus Reinhart Jaehnig. While Auman was in custody, Jaehnig led Officer VanderJagt on a foot chase. The two men had come face to face with each other in the past, but it would be the last time that would happen—Jaehnig shot VanderJagt before taking his own life.

Auman would be officially charged for the murder on November 19, 1997 after two Denver newspapers looked into the lengthy police record of Jaehnig. Surprisingly enough, Jaehnig's police record contained seven counts of carrying a concealed weapon, most recently in April of that year. Word also circulated about Jaehnig's involvement as a member of a white supremacist hate group.

All of this prompted the district attorney to pursue charges against

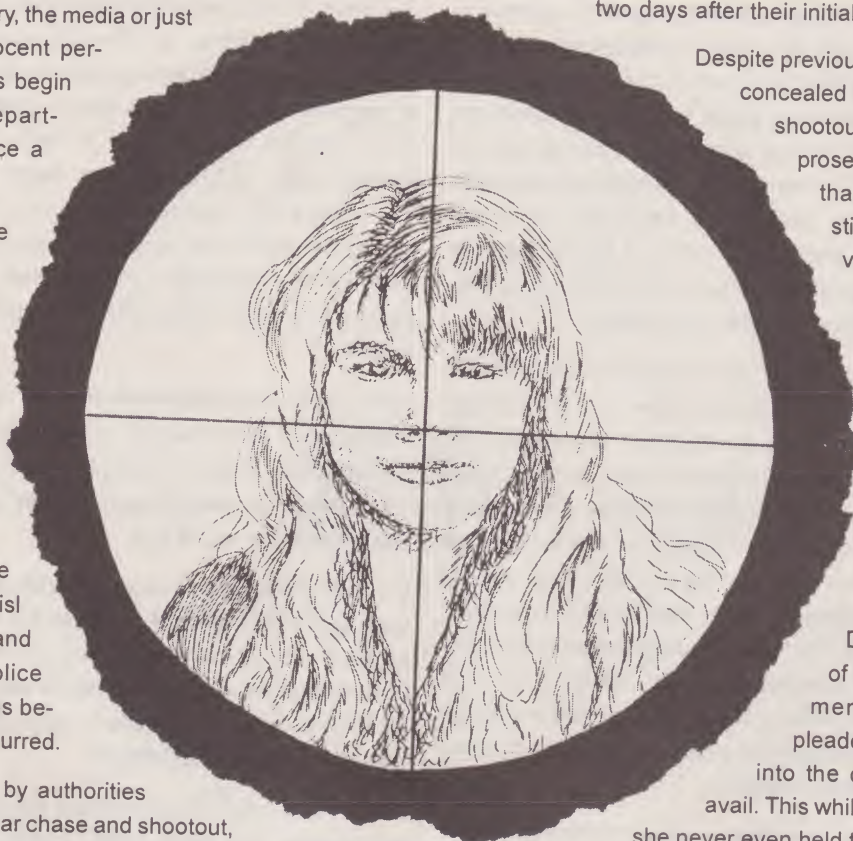
Auman, who denied being a part of any hate group. But the district attorney's case revolved around that accusation, while trying to prove that Lisl Auman was "aiding, abetting, advising or encouraging the gunman, making her a complicitor and just as liable as the person who fires the weapon." To make things worse for her defense, three key prosecuting witnesses, officers from the crime scene, revised their original statements about the incident two days after their initial reports.

Despite previous convictions for carrying a concealed weapon by Jaehnig and a shootout during the car chase, the prosecution led the jury to believe that Officer VanderJagt may still be alive if Auman had advised the officers that Jaehnig was carrying a weapon. The police denied accounts in their amended statements that Auman did indeed notify officers of the suspect's description, such as what he was wearing and what the gun looked like.

Due to the inconsistencies of the officers' original statements, the defense team pleaded with the judge to look into the contradictions, but to no avail. This while the defense argued that she never even held the gun that murdered Officer VanderJagt. No witness statements or fingerprint evidence showed that Auman ever handled the gun.

Because Jaehnig was no longer alive, Lisl Auman was found guilty of first-degree murder and felony menacing with a weapon. The Colorado state felony murder law does not require an individual to have actually pulled the trigger to be charged in a murder that another committed, as long as they were part of the accused crime already in progress.

The accused crime was for burglary. According to a web site set up to help free Auman, the gunman and Auman did not previously know one another. He was nothing but "a friend of a friend" who was helping Auman remove belongings from her ex-boyfriend's house, which she had permission to do. She was unaware that the car she was riding in had been stolen. But this incident is what





was used against her by the prosecution in bringing charges of second-degree burglary and conspiracy to commit first-degree burglary, which Auman was also convicted of.

Questions linger about this case going as far back as a quote from District Attorney William Ritter at a press conference the day after the shooting when he said that the department was "not pursuing a homicide case against Auman." One could argue that Auman was prosecuted simply because of the "company she kept," at least on that fateful day.

Could it have been that the Denver Police Department needed a scapegoat to compensate for the loss of one of their fallen heroes? Or was it to put the city at ease about an ongoing problem dealing with hate crimes, dating back to 1990 when Maxwell Thomas was convicted of killing Denver hairdresser David "Slim" Timoner?

Were the reports and coverage of the case biased? It's up for argument whether the media convicted Auman of these charges before she even had her day in court. As she remained detained, the media stayed busy with reports of hate crimes throughout the area. Of course, citizens were always kept updated on the case against Auman. Each time new stories dealing with hate crimes were reported, the people in the city of Denver were reminded about the Auman case, often presented without the full facts of the case.

The reality of it is that the families of everyone involved were left to

pick up the pieces after a desperate man took the life of an officer in the line of duty and took the future from the only one left behind.

What should worry American's about this case is the way the police department and court system handled the situation. The jury never heard the original statements from officers because they were not admitted as evidence—statements that could completely change the outcome of the case. Lisl Auman was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life without parole and she never even pulled the trigger, much less held the gun. Has justice been served? ❧

*Note: To date, no new trial has been granted, but the push for an appeal is in the hands of The Appellate Division of the Colorado Public Defenders Office and The National Association of Criminal Defender Lawyers.*

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Lisl Ellen Auman  
<http://www.lisl.com>

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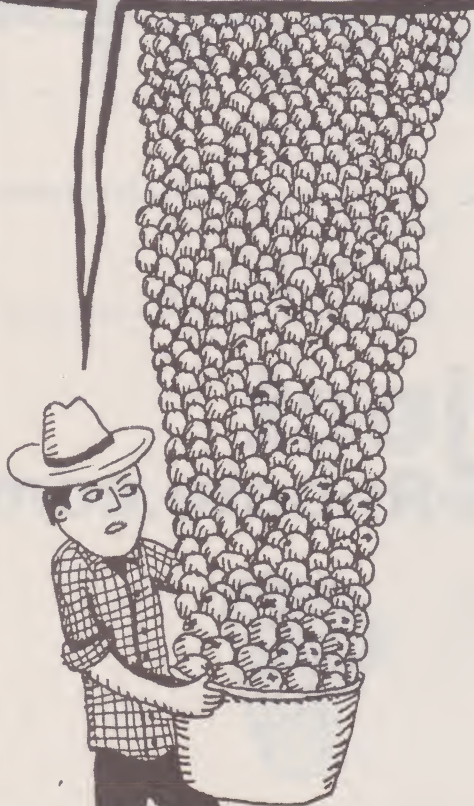


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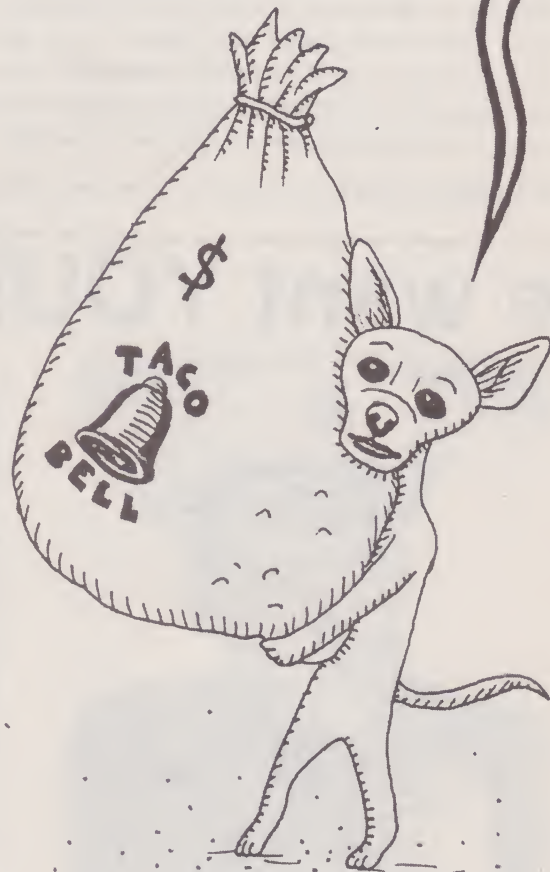
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
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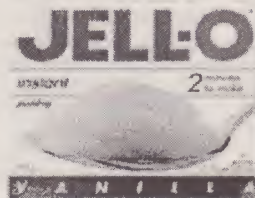
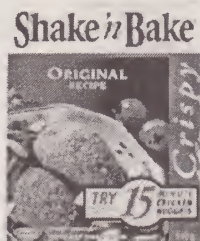
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# TOP PICKS

Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.



**Aviso'hara • *Our Lady of the Highway* • Vital Cog Records** • Described as "noise with a pop element," this indie rock album contains 11 tracks layered with distorted tempo changes, well-balanced vocals and great instrumentation. Each song and instrument stands on its own and the album really flows well. The opening track begins "in full two-minute sonic boom form" and drops into "Bradley, Wake Up," about playing in a band and paying your dues the hard way. The rest of this disc touches on failure, fragile egos and co-dependency. The album is named after a roadside attraction off of I-95 in Maryland and is solid from beginning to end.

**Deathgirl.com • self-titled • Medea Records** • "Daddy," the first track on this album, starts off with a sped up Trance beat, and Melissa Emily's sweet vocals above. Perhaps this track is intended to scare off those who disapprove of heavy rock and electronica's recent marriage. They turn down the electronics a bit from there and bring in the guitars, sounding like a cross between Garbage and Jack Off Jill. It's hard to pigeonhole this band, since their music could almost be considered Pop, if not heavy Pop. Case in point...their cover of Madonna's "Lucky Star" has pretty heavy guitars, but it still is a pop song, with some vocoder altered vocals. There's even a guitar solo for crissakes. "All I Want" has a keyboard riff right out of A Flock of Seagulls's "I Ran." "Deathgirl (nppc mix)" starts off as a ballad, but evolves into a Drum 'N Bass influenced dance song. Pop, Rock or Electronica, Deathgirl.com does it all, and does it well.

**Melissa Lefton • self-titled • Jive Records** • Jive Records is the label that currently brings you the trifecta of prepubescent pop, the Backstreet Boys, \*Nsync and Britney Spears. So it was no surprise when I popped Melissa Lefton's CD in my stereo and the sugary pop sounds started coming out of my speakers. What *did* surprise me was the sarcastic lyrics that Lefton was singing. "My Hit Song" basically reveals Pop groups as manufactured commodities, with lyrics like "This is my image / these are my dancers / come on promote me / come on adore me." Other songs, like "Sugar Daddy," left me rolling on the floor, actually enjoying this album. Like one-hit-wonder anarchists Chumbawumba, who said that the best way to get their message out there was to make the same crap music that radio stations play, Lefton should be able to sneak into teenage slumber parties across the nation in no time. The revolution against the current boy band and "Look at me, I'm so sexy...but I'm a virgin" girl singers craze is coming from within the same organization that employs such non-artists! Genius!

**Pilot to Gunner • *Games At High Speeds* • Gern Blandsten** • If the awesome basslines don't get you, the energized guitars will. Or, if not, the vocals are sure to impress. Still not satisfied? The drumming on *Games At High Speeds* is incredible, a pounding force to be reckoned with. So, what I'm saying is this is a complete album, a solid work of exceptional proportions. At times their sound is reminiscent of Jawbox, but never long enough to really say that's what they sound like. You'll also find, at times, sounds akin to Modest

Mouse, Braid and numerous others. In the end, you're left with a wholly original album full of energy, melody and rock attitude. It's the new wave of punk rock, where there's a greater focus on the rock and less focus on "trying" to be punk. It's the kind of record that only takes one or two listens to really hook you. I never want to get unhooked.

**Spacehog • *The Hogsysey* • Artemis Records** • I hate to do this, I really do. I know IMPACT is all about the lesser-known indie bands and, believe me, I love 'em. Even the bad ones. But this is Spacehog. Spacehog is one of the very few bands that makes it to radio and actually deserves their success. This is no corporate gig. This band has been able to take their slightly askew rock sound and win the critics over. You remember Spacehog from their hit "In The Meantime" a few years ago. They're back with their third disc, *The Hogsysey*, and they're even better. "I Want To Live" has been getting some radio play but not nearly enough. And, barring some miracle, we probably won't hear another cut from this CD, so you're going to have to buy it. You really don't need a reason like that to buy it anyway. It's a fantastic disc, maybe more straight-ahead rock than the past two, but every bit as good. If you haven't heard them, first, I'm sorry. Second, think Collective Soul mixed with Cake mixed with Soul Coughing. Take a trip on *The Hogsysey*!

**Squarepusher • *Go Plastic* • Warp Records** • If there is one word to describe the music of Tom Jenkinson (Squarepusher), it is *weird*. From his early recordings on Spymania, he has been turning heads and impressing listeners everywhere. This year's *Go Plastic* is no exception. It seems to build on his previous works, taking the Drum 'N' Bass hyperactivity of *Big Loada* and adding a touch of the Jazz Fusion he developed for *Music is Rotted One Note*. It feels like a sequel to *Selection Sixteen*, but with added schizophrenia. The perfect track to illustrate this is "Go! Spastic," with an impossibly high bpm rate, classic snare rushes and just a hint of jazziness. "The Exploding Psychology" features a keyboard line that seems lifted from Dr. Dre's "The Chronic" album. "My Fucking Sound" seems more like a protest than a song, without much structure. The final track, "Plaistow Flex Out," is one of the few mellow moments on the CD, with a beat that would make Missy Elliot proud. Squarepusher continues to evolve as a musician, continually developing new sounds and combining them with the best elements from his vast catalog.

**Strike Anywhere • *Change Is A Sound* • Jade Tree** • "I refuse to run and I will die before I kneel." With a fist held high in the air, these political punk warriors blast a double-chamber's worth of musical artillery out on the masses. I'm not sure what is more powerful, the music or the lyrics. Socio-political punches are thrown on nearly every track with a rapid musical delivery kicking at the shins. This intense, melodic, hardcore punk rock will bruise your body and your brain with a quickness. You've been warned.

**Ted Leo/Pharmacists • *The Tyranny of Distance* • Lookout** • This album possesses incredible power. It has brilliant composition, sound combinations

I've never heard before, and incredible driving guitar and beats which provide a perfect vehicle for the philosophical feast of lyrics. It is a gentle, pleasant assault on the independent music lover's ears. Not your ordinary Lookout offering, it's hard rock that's been kneaded to soft, doughy perfection.

**The Coup • *Party Music* • 75 Ark** • The Coup is one of the hardest hitting hip-hop groups around. Every album is a forward movement from the previous release. Every track is a bit of fresh-flowing enlightenment. Why can't more hip-hop crews recognize that lyrics are as important as beats? It's easy to rhyme, but it's hard to actually say something. The Coup (Boots on the mic, Pam the Funktress on the turntables) takes the hard route and arrives on time. The beats are the kind that will set a party off, get your ass shakin' and your head bouncin'. The funk is in effect on every track, but it's the creative shit that will really blow your mind. The fresh ass guitar and soulful vocals on track three are a perfect example or the ultra funky keys on track four. The Dead Prez guest on track five and the truth in that track will bring politicians to their knees. "Nowalaters", track eight, is one of the most honest and touching rhymes about sex and teenage pregnancy I've ever heard. I could go on, but you should realize by now that if you aren't bumpin' to this you already lost the game. (Too bad you gotta wait till Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> to get it.)

**The Lawrence Arms/The Chinkees • *Present Day Memories* • Asian Man** • The Lawrence Arms are one of the best punk bands around. They have an effect on me that few bands (Jawbreaker, Gameface, Alkaline Trio) are able to produce. It's a combination of lyrical brilliance, vocal perfection and infectious music. Lyrically, they offer up a combination of socio/political and personal/emotional tunes. They're mature, honest and powerful. The vocals are shared between Brendan and Chris, throaty and sensitive respectively. That allows the band to emot on several levels and is the reason their different song themes are even more effective. Musically, The Lawrence Arms deliver aggressive punk rock with solid melodies, thick-ass basslines and working-class grittiness that is about as honest as can be and shockingly delivered by only three guys. I could go on, but The Chinkees deserve respect too. Fronted by Mike Park (Asian Man kingpin), they're a five-piece of insanely skilled Asian cats rockin' out organ-driven, ska-influenced pop punk. Put on your dancing shoes, because it has been two years since The Chinkees released new material and it was worth the wait. Four out of the five tracks are upbeat while the last track features Mike Park alone on the guitar offering up a personal and poignant tune.

**Various Artists • *Universal Indicator: Innovation in the Dynamics of Acid* • Rephlex Records** • After much public demand, Rephlex has decided to re-release the Universal Indicator series. All four color-coded records are compiled into one CD, continuously mixed by the Kosmik Kommando. I'd love to tell you some history about it, but the folks at Rephlex refuse to divulge it. They even left out artist and track names. No matter. If you are a fan of acid house music, then you need to get this CD.



# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

## CD releases

**59 Times the Pain** • *Calling the Public* • **Burning Heart Records** • Originally from Sweden, 59 Times the Pain takes the sound of hardcore punk rock and makes it their own. Their sound is reminiscent of The Clash and Social Distortion, with powerful guitars, shout out choruses and angry, but not screaming vocals.

**Agent 51** • *Just Keep Runnin'* • **Adeline Records** • This is a re-release of the album originally available on Suburban Hooligan Records. They added two new tracks to make it more appealing to the fans, for a total of twenty tracks. Their sound can be described as a polished Rancid, with multiple voice choruses and gritty guitars.

**Alto Heceta** / **Speed of Sauce** • *Split CD* • **Synaptic Tactic Records** • This split CD sees two of Iowa's most talented bands sharing the spotlight. Alto Heceta plays pop-influenced emo, yet two vocalists. Their three songs are full of emotion and energy, yet are mellow at times. Speed of Sauce picks up where AH leaves off, with angular guitar riffs and vocals similar to Radiohead's Thom Yorke.

**Apparatus Engine** • *Save* • **Creep Records** • If there was a CD that straddled the line between late-90s major-label shite and post-rock bliss, this would be it. However, this band's vocalist sounds like Geddy Lee from Rush. EXACTLY like him (think 'Tom Sawyer'). And I hate Rush. In any event, this CD made me laugh when he first gets on the mic in 'Blackout' but then I listened and found some really good music instrumentation here. If you like indie-rock and Rush (I'm sure there's at least one of you out there), give this a go-round.

**Blood Has Been Shed** • *Novella of Uriel* • Hey, more of that progressive-ish hardcore here. Progressive-ish meaning this isn't Voivod or Dream Theatre. This is far more intense and fast. It's technically geared hardcore, that's what it is. Maybe I should label it tech-core. I think I just created a new label! Damn I'm good. Oh, and so are they.

**Blume** • *Low Glider Bus Rider* • **Artyzal Records** • I have to say I am getting tired of the Rap-Metal combination. What am I to listen to? Blume, that's what. They blend Folk music with Hip-Hop beats and scratches, plus some jazz and even country influences for an interesting sound. This is what you would have expected Everlast's albums to sound like after he had his heart attack and got all into acoustic guitar stuff. Plus, the Hip-Hop stuff is kept at a minimum, just showing up as a recurring scratch or a fat bass line. What should this be called? Folk-Jazz-Hop? Hip-Folk-Jazz? Just call it creative. Call it good.

**Bottles and Skulls** • *Never Kiss the Wasp* • **Cheetah Records** • This is what a nervous breakdown sounds like. Bottles and Skulls play a cross between rock and punk with reckless abandon. There is a slight blues influence in the guitar work. Lead singer Alpha Booser sounds like a straight edge guy who got sick of sobriety and is experiencing his first drunken stupor.

**Broke Americans** • *Self-titled* • **Industrial Strength Records** • This is the kind of music you would hear at a party with a local band playing, perhaps after drinking one too many beers. Not that they sound cheesy. In fact, their production is excellent. They just mix alternative rock with slightly heavier than usual guitars, and scratchy vocals that more than once reminded me of Vince Neil of Mötley Crüe or Sebastian Bach of Skid Row.

**Burnt By The Sun/Luddite Clone** • *Split CD* • **Ferret Music** • Don't turn this way up when you put it in. It will scare the sh\*t right out of you, like it did me. I just changed my pants. There are six thrash songs on here. They'll all scare you actually, but the first one begins in such a way that, well, see, oh, listen for yourself. Don't be a sissy. This is mega-intense, mega-heavy, mega-shredded.

**Cadillac Blindside** • *The Allegory of Death and Fame EP* • **Fueled by Ramen** • This six-song EP appears at first to be something different and deep. It looks (and looks can be deceiving) as though you are in for something moody and dark. I can't say that it totally panned out that way. It is a solid punk disc with six catchy and fast paced songs. Good tunes and catchy riffs make this a fun disc, if not wildly memorable.

**Candlewyrck** • *Candlewyrck* • **Votive Records** • Oh hell no. He did NOT give me a country CD to review. SONOFABITCH!!! He's challenging me, that's what he's doing. OK, I won't lie, I didn't listen to the whole thing. I can't. It's country. What I did listen to was all right. For country. The two main dudes seem to be very proficient at guitar and mandolin and the production value is very high. Still, it's country. If you like country, knock yourself out.

**Catacract** • *Golem* • **Ferret Music** • Hardcore, Switzerland style. This is loud, aggressive, no bulls&^% hardcore. They have been helping American bands like Grade, Bane and Buried Alive tour Europe so when you hear about these boys coming to the states, throw them a

bone, huh? We can do more for international relations than the dickhead in the White House can.

**Chicago/Arise From The Ashes** • *Split CD* • **Sinister Label** • 18 songs!!! Getcher 18 songs here! This is a huge comp of punk, hardcore and slowcore (is that really a label?) tunes from Chicago bands (I think). You've got Frontside, Authority Abuse, Kung Fu Rick, Division, Superleuth and John Brown Battery to name a few.

**Choking Victim** • *Crack Rock Steady EP / Squatta's Paradise Split CD* • **Tent City Records** • I don't know why I liked this album so much. Maybe it was the 'One, Two, Fuck You' countdown at the beginning of 'Apple Pie + Police State.' Or maybe it was the liner notes which encourages you to steal the album by stuffing it in your pants. Most likely it was because the Crack Rock Steady EP has such horrible production values, that it became endearing. It improves so much by the time Squatta's Paradise rolls around, that I thought it was a different band. These guys play Ska-Core without horns, but with plenty of guitar riffs and angry vocals.

**Citizen Fish** • *Life Size* • **Honest Don's** • Oh, god gimmie more of this snotty English punk. I love it. You can smell the thick black ale and thousand year old pubs. This is how punk should be written, played and listened to. After eight discs, these guys show no signs of slowing down or getting stale. This slick release even comes with a video which I'm sure if my computer were better, would be thrilling to watch.

**Colleen Coadic** • *The Opposite Only Better* • **self-released** • By the second or third listen, this nice pop-rock record with "electronic flavor" turns into a very deep lyrical journey through a storyteller's soul. Lyrics are full of Coadic's life experiences through heartache and longing for affection. Her vocals sound strong at times but fragile just the same. Like many other female songwriters, Coadic also plays acoustic guitar on her fourth independent release out of Anchorage, Alaska.

**Comin Correct** • *In Memory of* • **Triple Crown Records** • This album is dedicated to the memory of Comin Correct lead singer Rick Healey's father, who succumbed to cancer in 1999. The anger and sadness felt by Healey is apparent, not only on the title track, but also on the other ten tracks, where he unleashes powerful screams. The result is a hardcore album with a true feeling of reality that is lacking in many other bands.

**Contender** • *Scenic Overlook* • **Not Bad Records** • Who does this sound like? This sounds like someone I just reviewed last month. Oh yeah! Hot Water Music! And I see here that they cite them as an influence. This is a mixture of melodic and hooky punk. It's aggressive at times but they never get carried away. They play within themselves and it comes through in a really tight, really soulful way. Cool EP.

**Coquettish** • *Total Pops Madness EP* • **Asian Man** • These four guys from Japan rip out seven tracks of rapid-fire, ska-influenced punk rock. It's really solid stuff and highly addictive. Imagine Op Ivy, then make 'em a hardcore band. Or think Rancid, but way more aggressive. The tempo changes are simply rad, catching you by surprise and then sucking you in. Put on your skankin' shoes and prepare to get crushed by stage divers.

**Crispus Attacks** • *Red Black Blood Attack* • **Soda Jerk Records** • How are you with your history? Crispus Attacks was the first person to die in which war? These guys are not dead. They are busy throwing some fierce hardcore your way. This sonic wall of ferocity will have you throwing down in the pit right in your own living room. Driving, anthem-like calls to glory punctuate this 15-song disc which incorporates hardcore and old school punk very effectively. (Answer: The Revolutionary War, and, he was black.)

**Cursive** • *Burst and Bloom EP* • **Saddle Creek** • *Burst and Bloom* is a five-song follow-up to last year's critically acclaimed *Domestica*. The tempo changes, "Sink to the Beat," serves as a letter of intent for the band and the EP. There are references to Shudder to Think, Fugazi, and the Chapel Hill scene, all of which hint at, but don't fully describe, Cursive's music. They even describe the EP as a "cheap strategy" and "marketing scheme" to build "awareness for the next LP." As the song slowly builds, you can sense the impending musical explosion; when it arrives, it is much more intense and powerful than you had anticipated. And that's just the first song. The five songs from the latest Cursive marketing scheme leave you wanting more, and soon. So, when's that full length coming out?

**Da Beat Minerz** • *Brace 4 Impak* • **Rawkus Entertainment** • If you know the label, then you know what to expect. Producers DJ Evil Dee and Mr. Walt bring an underground collection of emcees along for their first headlining effort as Da Beat Minerz. Unfortunately, the help won't make this one a classic, but there are still some gems that shine. Among the contributions are Royce Da 5'9, Jayo Felony, Talib Kweli, Black Moon, The Flipmode Squad and The Cocoa Bravaz with Blackhearted Skavangers featured on the bangin' "Extreme Situation."

**Darkest Hour** • *So Sedated, So Secure* • **Victory Records** • So Sedated, So Secure opens up with "An Epitaph," which is typical hardcore...until the chorus. That's where the Iron Maiden style riffs kicked in. I was intrigued. Lucky for me, this was not a once-in-an-album occurrence. If you think hardcore has nowhere to go musically, check out Darkest Hour for a kick in the nuts that will leave you wanting for more.

**David McReynolds** • *Promoting Peace and Justice - Interview* • **Socialist Party USA/No-U-Turn Productions** • This CD is an interview with 2000 Socialist Party USA presidential candidate David McReynolds. The interview is broken into 15 pieces, one of which is a song by David Rovics. The interview will give you a great overview of what the party stands for. If you're looking for an alternative to the two options we're marketed in our current system, try this CD out and see if the Socialist Party is more along the lines of your belief system.

**Dead 50's** • *Standing on the Edge of Forever* • **Smorgasbord Records** • With plenty of guitar hooks and catchy melodies, Dead 50's are threatening to take over rock and roll with their particular style of melodic punk / pop punk. The songs are catchy and energetic, sure to get you on your feet.

**Dead End Kids** • *Still Dead* • **E.U.G. Records** • For over 15 years, DEK has been tearing shit up in Central Florida. They've had dozen of releases and toured a bit. The five-piece plays old-style punk rock along the lines of old Replacements and the Sex Pistols. Their version of the Pistols' "Rock 'n Roll Swindle" isn't recorded well, but sounds great nonetheless, with a snotty, sloppy punk appeal. These eight tracks show that punk really isn't dead.

**Dead Moon** • *Trash and Burn* • **Empty Records** • I hate walking into a movie after it has started, or trying to join a conversation in progress. That's what I feel like I'm doing here. Dead Moon has been around for a long time (over 10 discs now) and, from what I can gather, they've been putting out the same music since day one. The music is interesting, like an AC/DC light or Bad Company with balls, but Fred Cole's voice is FAR more interesting. You have to give it a listen to understand.

**Diabolical Exploits** • *Diabolical Exploits* • **Substandard Records** • Hey! Is this a bootleg copy of a young Gene Simmons fronting a punk band?! Really?! That's immediately what I thought of. This is some cool Cali punk. Track nine, "Lies," is tighter than a drum. "Tengo Nada" is also hip, as is most of this disc.

**DJ Swamp** • *Never is Now* • **Lakeshore Records** • Best known for his DJ gig with Beck, DJ Swamp attacks producing a record like it is his child. Instead of filling up the credit list with guest artists, he does everything himself, from the scratching to the ryming, which sound like Sir Mix-A-Lot. In both the instrumental and vocal tracks, he demonstrates his abilities at the decks with the dexterity and fluidity that few accomplish.

**Dr. Israel and Brooklyn Jungle Sound System** • *Black Rose Liberation* • **Baraka Foundation** • Get ready for a unique experience. Dr. Israel blends dub, reggae, jungle and hip-hop for a style that could only come from the melting pot that is New York. For years, the English have dominated the Drum 'N Bass scene while American artists struggled to keep up. The jungle tracks on this album should lay to rest the notion that the United States cannot produce good D'NB. In the meantime, settle in for the contact high you will get from listening to *Black Rose Liberation*.

**Drowningman** • *Drowningman Still Loves You EP* • **Equal Vision** • I had a hard time with the screaming intensity of previous Drowningman releases. But something has changed. The Vermont five-piece has expanded/matured their sound with thicker melodies and the addition of more vocal creativity. The screaming is present on every track and is used often (and effectively), but it's countered by well-sung aspects and spoken parts, something missing on previous releases. This is still hardcore as hell. Instead, though, of hurting my ears, this helps my blood boil, causes my head to sway to the grinding, pounding beats and forces my body to rock along to a catchiness (not in a pop-sense) that I couldn't previously find with their releases. I'm, frankly, blown away by this five-track aural assault. This is, by far, their best release to date.

**Eighteen Visions** • *The Best of* • **Trustkill Records** • This CD compiles songs from various releases by Eighteen Visions, an incredible hardcore band that infuses metal into their sound. They re-recorded songs from their *No Time For Love?*, *Yesterday is Time Killed* and *Lifeless* CDs, plus they included one new track. Their abilities are best witnessed on the opening track "Motionless and White," where lead singer James Hart switches from hardcore style screaming to singing in a Deftones-chorus style.

**Eltro** • *Velodrome* • **Absolutely Kosher Records** • Prepare to be hypnotized by Eltro's *Velodrome*, starting with Diana Prescott's soothing vocals, sometimes electronically manipulated for an added effect. Add



# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Jorge Sandrin's repetitive guitar loops, Ted Johnson's beats and Elmer Clayton's keyboards and you've got a recipe for post-rock psychedelia. The songs are mostly slow numbers that take a while to develop, yet are strangely engaging.

**Enemies/Pitch Black • split CD • Lookout! Records** • Yikes! Here is a branch away from the Lookout! Records we have come to know and love. This disc is a 12-song split between two bands which inhabit a slightly darker realm than some of their syrupy pop-punk labelmates. While it looks like you are in for some serious doom and gloom, this disc is fast punk that is oddly catchy. Both bands are stylistically similar, making them a good pair to split this good disc.

**F-Minus • Suburban Blight • Helicat Records** • For their second album, F-Minus decided to make things nice and democratic. Each member wrote songs and sang on the album. *Suburban Blight* is extremely fast and furious. Whoever might be singing does so with throaty screams, and the music never slows down from an old school punk / hardcore sound. I felt the spirit of Corrosion of Conformity, back when they played hardcore, especially on the track "Capital Murder."

**Full Frequency • Momentum • Gonzo! Records** • This CD is packaged like a cheesy home-studio rave CD and the press sheet said they were from the LA-area so I wasn't too hopeful on this one. However this CD rocks like early-90s Wax Trax! material and bands like Sister Machine Gun and Front 242, no doubt! If you're missing a great industrial CD, this is it mainly because the drum sequencing on all these tracks sounds dated as well as the vocals, but in a good way. In a kitschy, Gen-X way, I like the cheesy industrial of 10 years ago; it was an honest expression of form. And so is the music on this disc.

**Good Riddance • Symptoms Of A Levelling Spirit • Fat Wreck** • If what you're doing works, why change it? I think that's Good Riddance's theory. I'm not complaining. Their brand of powerful, melodic punk rock is some of the best stuff out there (and it's been that way since 1986). A couple of the Descendents/ALL guys (Stevenson and Egerton) helped engineer this album, maybe assisting in creating the clean, yet still aggressive, sound. As always, the lyrics are dominated by proactive, social/political commentary and criticism. If you're a fan of GR, this album is a must have. Or, if you're looking for something full of aggression, melody and fronted by killer vocals, check this out.

**Grounded • Grounded • self-released** • Punk-influenced indie here. Get past the first song. Sorry, I wasn't too keen on that one. The rest of the disc is decent. They even sound a bit Beatle-esque at times. They admit that the production quality isn't great but I bet they sound pretty damned good live. Aside from the Auburn shirt the dude's wearing on the back cover, they're pretty slick.

**High Lo Fi • Three Sided Single EP • Does Everyone Stare?** • The vocals are what first grabbed me with this three song EP. He's got great vocals along the lines of The Marshes or even a little like Sugar. The music is powerful pop punk stuff that reminds me of the aforementioned bands as well as Big Drill Car. The recording is very solid and the hooks on this release are hard to resist.

**His Name is Alive • Someday my Blues will Cover the Earth • Beggar's Banquet Records** • Musical schizophrenic Wam Delever's recording career has included all sorts of genres, including Rock, Experimental Noise, and Folk. This time around, he delivers a surprising R & B recording. Centered around Lovetta Pippen and her lovely Gospel Choir voice, Delever builds an excellent make-out album.

**Hi-Standard • Love is a Battlefield • Fat Wreck Chords** • Hi-Standard is a Japanese melodic punk outfit that has been around for 10 years. Their latest, *Love is a Battlefield*, is a short but sweet, 4 song EP full of melodies and punchy guitars. Plus you get an excellent cover of "Can't Help Falling in Love."

**Holly Golightly • Singles Round Up • Damaged Goods Records** • This release by Holly Golightly (her real name) contains all her eleven single releases and their b-sides. Even though she is from England, you could be fooled into thinking she is from somewhere like California, since her take on garage rock sounds very American. Many songs have bluesy guitars and harmonica, and the whole album has a certain retro feeling, a '60s vibe.

**HOME Vol. III Split CD • Pavo / Rhythm of Black Lines • Post Parlo Records** • This was supposed to be released as Vol. II in July of last year, but due to production problems it kept getting pushed back. Now, one year later, it is finally finished. Pavo starts things off with two tracks, both of which are slow and instrumental. Their style consists of mellow guitar picking and some synth effects, plus syncopated drumming that combine to create a dreamy effect. Rhythm of Black Lines picks up the pace a bit, with three tracks, two of which are instrumental. A new version of "Set a Summery Table" features processed beats, while "That's the Fuck You" sounds like something Citters Buggin' might play.

**Hoods • Time...The Destroyer • Victory Records** • I'm always nervous when I see the CD's with the really tough looking guys on the back. It can mean a. they're bad ass or b. they suck and are trying to LOOK bad ass. Fortunately, Hoods are the prior. These guys play blistering hardcore and have shared the stage with the likes of Hatebreed and Papa Roach to name but two. I'm sure they'll be in your town to smash your face in real soon.

**Hundred Hands • Little Eyes • Deep Elm Records** • Aaron Pillar and Christopher Crisci of the Applesseed Cast make up two thirds of Hundred Hands, with Pillar in charge of the vocal duties and producer Ed Rose behind the drum kit. Their sound is mellow, beautiful and emotional. In one word, melancholic.

**Ill Niño • Revolution...Revolución • Roadrunner Records** • In the tradition of Puerto Rico's Puya and Brazil's Soulfly, Ill Niño blends elements of Latin music with some pretty heavy music. Lyrics are mostly in English, peppered with Spanish verses. The vocals switch effortlessly from melodic singing to Fear Factory style guttural screams. If you think that Latin music should be nowhere near metal, don't worry. The use of Latin instruments, such as Conga drums and Flamenco guitars, could be considered secondary. There is no doubt *Revolution...Revolución* is metal.

**Inspection 12 • In Recovery • Honest Don's** • Here are 12 tunes that you are gonna love. Poppy punk with smooth vocals and riffs so catchy that you'll need a lobotomy to get them out of your head. This disc starts off with a bang and never lets up through all twelve tunes. They sound like Nerf Herder or a smoothed out Screaming Weasel and I hope to hear more from them soon and often.

**James Hunter • Kick it Around • Ruf Records** • Take a trip back to the 1950's with James Hunter, as he serenades you with his take on the R&B sound of that decade. Even though he's English, you'd never be able to tell from his voice, which could be compared with a young Ray Charles or a Sam Cooke. Tempos are mixed, from slow ballads ("Lover's Prayer"), to catchy up-tempo numbers ("Believe Me Baby").

**Jersey • Definition EP • Fueled by Ramen** • These guys have been rockin' out for over four years and were obviously raised on the classic rock sound of Aerosmith and the like. They have managed to combine punk and straight up rock and roll into a delicately balanced mix. This five-song EP is good stuff and I am looking forward to a full-length.

**Joe Davis • Hope Chest • In Music We Trust** • Who's this Joe Davis guy you ask? He's the lead singer of the Pinehurst Kids. So, is this some rocking Kids-esque affair, like Superchunk or the Get Up Kids after multiple lattes? No, on this solo effort, Joe's wearing his Elliott Smith, sensitive singer-songwriter hat. Fret not, gentle listener, the results are quite pleasing to the ears. The mellow, sparser arrangements allow his vocal melodies and lyrical content a chance to take center stage. *Hope Chest* is a nice change of pace for Davis.

**Joshua • The Teardrop Trio EP • Does Everyone Stare?** • With a more mellow approach than on previous releases, Joshua offers three tracks (totaling around 15 minutes) of melodic emopop. It's very creative material and you can tell the trio was really prepared for this recording session.

**Judah Johnson • Judah Johnson • Flameshovel Records** • Cure and Oasis fans unite! Judah Johnson is here! Their press release says they've been around for two years now. Where have they been? Or, moreover, where have WE been? Like I said, this is custom-tailored for Cure and Oasis kids. Only six songs but this is all about quality, not quantity.

**Karsh Kale • Realize • Six Degrees Records** • Pronounced Kursh Kahl-lay, KK is one of the US leaders of the Asian Massive movement and this is his debut release. The music on this disc is truly unique. It takes so many influences from genuine Indian folk music and combines them with Western sounds like trance, drum and bass, and hip-hop while demanding your attention. This really is a CD worth buying. If I was a feisty corporate-rock critic, I'd say Kale carves his own niche in pan-global music. But I'm a broke-ass college student, so I'm saying it's good for chilling out to.

**Kayonne Riley • The Prophet Said to Boo • self-released** • Kayonne, formerly of The Implications, is a local Orlando artist who offers sweet, smooth, cool, vibecious vocals over bass-guitar-heavy, well-mixed electronic accompaniment. It's loopy, groove-driven music that creates a fantastically mellow atmosphere in any setting. Very good stuff.

**Kill Your Idols • Funeral for a Feeling • Side One Dummy Records** • It's hard to describe Kill Your Idols. On one hand, you have song structures that belong on anything released by Epitaph. On the other hand, you have hardcore-style, screamed vocals. Add some guitar solos and recurring melodic elements and you have this unique band.

**Kolya • Kolya • Caulfield Records** • Boston trio Kolya turns in what is

almost a really damn good album. Instrumentally, the songs draw the listener in with a combination of melodic and dissonant guitar playing, and a solid rhythm section. The vocals, though earnest and impassioned, are weak at times. The spoken word passages work well, but the shouting takes away from the overall feel of some of the material. All in all, it's a promising debut.

**Lady Bianca • Rollin' • Rooster Blues Records** • "And now for something completely different..." What's that from anyway? Lady Bianca has been playing music for some time now. She has played with Van Morrison, Frank Zappa and John Lee Hooker to name just a few. She has a fantastic blues voice. She has a fantastic voice period. If you want to break away from that punk, ska and hardcore nonsense for an hour or so, check this out. This is stripped down blues with a down home sound.

**Lazycame • finbegin • Hall of Records** • For his first solo album, ex-Jesus and Mary Chain William Reid wanted to get things right, which is why it took him so long to get it out there. Well, here it is, and it's worth the wait. The name Lazycame is appropriate, since the songs are lazy, lo-fi songs with Reid singing in his best Bob Dylan/Lou Reed impersonation. He pulls it off, really. Forget traditional song structures, too. He tends to go off in musical tangents at any given time, exploring a note or a riff until he is happy with it. Particularly out of place is "Rokit," which employs a drum machine and other gloomy electronics.

**Left • My Disease • Medea Records** • Whoa. The inside cover of this CD is freaking spooky. Some dude looking like a zombie or something. I guess it's somewhat indicative of the sound—a grindcore disc through and through. There are a couple of faster, almost hardcore tunes but it's mostly slower and more deliberate. Tight music.

**M. Ward • End of Amnesia • Cool Basement** • Mmmm. This is some outstandingly dreamy acoustic guitar that's rooted deeply in the American folk tradition. It has a sound reminiscent of the timeless classics of Bob Dylan, but with a much more abstract purpose. There are unusual sounds playing along with the music that give it an otherworldly feel.

**Malefaction • Crush the Dream • G7 Welcoming Committee** • How do you fit 23 tracks into just over 25 minutes? By playing the fastest, nastiest kind of grindcore you can. Malefaction, by the way, is more than qualified, as is evidenced by *Crush the Dream*. It is very likely that this amazingly intense music will make your ears explode. Thankfully, the lyrics are printed for the listener's enjoyment.

**Mariel • Fragments of a Dream • Aerial Sounds** • Toss this into the Adult Contemporary pile along with artists such as Annie Lennox or Phil Collins. It's a solid recording and she has a great voice. The music is poppy with some nice, REM-ish guitar-work.

**Martyr AD • The Human Condition In Twelve Fractions • Ferret Music** • Take Pantera and put them about five years into the future. That's Martyr AD. The music is fast with huge hooks and breakdowns, the vocals are painfully gruff, but the sound has an almost progressive feel to it. I'm not talking Queensryche here, no way. It's just much more intricate than your standard thrashcore disc. Very tight and technical.

**Matt Marque • Get There • Truckstop Records** • For his debut album, Matt Marque enlisted the help of Glenn Kotche (Wilco, Lofly Pillars), Steve Dorocke (Central Falls) and Matt Scheider (TOE). *Get There* is a lo-fi affair, where Marque showcases his skill at writing pop songs. His voice is quite unique and somewhat high pitched, as if he's two days away from hitting puberty.

**Melochrome • Stay A Little Longer • Loose Thread Recordings** • Melochrome took a considerable longer amount of time to record this record than to record their debut album (8 months vs. 14 days!). They also changed their music a bit, lessening the effects and concentrating more on the instruments. *Stay A Little Longer* is a mellow record, even melancholic, with waves of keyboards, layered guitars and vocals by a guy and a girl (whom I didn't care for). Perfect for a rainy day.

**Merrick • An Album for Raymond • Definit Records** • The times they are a-changin', even if lame rock journalistic clichés aren't. Pop punk is now embraced by mainstream America, MTV, and millions of record buyers. Who'da thunk it? So, what's this gotta do with Merrick, you ask? Well, they are reminiscent of some of the pop punkers that've conquered the charts, like Green Day and Lit. But there's also a touch of early Jawbreaker that renders their tunes too thoughtful and evocative, virtually destroying any chance of mega-superstardom. Don't worry guys, there's still M2. (It's a compliment, dammit!)

**Mico • Standing Inside A Shadow • Does Everyone Stare?** • This is a very guitar driven, straightforward rock album from an indie band out of Calgary. These 11-tracks are packaged well but the vocals keep the disc from being strong. On "Hallyon Day" the band asks, "what is it from that everyone is trying to escape?" Tough question. The diverse influences of this band include The Smiths, Swervedriver and Dag Nasty.



# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

**Milemarker • *Anaesthetic* • Jade Tree** • Originating out of Chapel Hill, N.C., this band mixes punk and hardcore with a new wave sound. Their fourth album is intense as they produce hardcore songs "without the typical hardcore instruments," mostly using keyboards, drum, bass and samplers. Three of the four members take turns with vocal duties; most distinctive is the "haunting" voice of Roby Newton. Her voice creeps up often through this 7-track trip, which has been labeled the "first evil-sounding, non-ironic new wave album you can dance to." This album starts chaotic and has a great groove to it. "Ant Architect" begins with a heavy bass line and vocal changes and only adds to the mystery of this disc.

**Ming + FS • *The Human Condition* • Om Records** • For their second full length release, DJ/producer duo Ming + FS blend plenty of electronica styles to energize just about anyone. Hip-Hop, electro, house, drum 'n' bass, two step and garage all share the spotlight. The one thing that characterizes every track is intensity. Plenty of artists appear as guest performers: Ada Dyer (vocals), Omri (beatbox), Macy Gray trumpeter Todd Simon (trumpet) and Hero Ric (vocals).

**Minus • *Jesus Christ Bobby* • Victory Records** • From Iceland, the land that brought you Björk, comes Minus, an extremely heavy hardcore band. Lead singer Krummi yells in a high pitched, distorted scream, which would not be out of place in a Dimmu Borgir album. Guitar riffs fly about with furious intensity as drum breaks pound you into submission.

**Moviola • *Rumors of the Faithful* • Spirit of Orr Records** • This unique pop-rock release is full of sincerity and emotion. The fifth album by this Ohio band is described as their "most realized, focused effort." Each member took turns writing the songs and they also traded instruments with one another during the recording sessions. Throughout this disc stories are told of real-life situations and real-life people. Vocal duties are also distributed throughout the band, and it works well. This disc is for times of relaxation and reflection.

**Mumia Abu-Jamal • *175 Progress Drive* • Alternative Tentacles Records** • This is a 27-track compilation featuring an award winning journalist and respected radio reporter out of Philadelphia. Mumia was shot and arrested in 1981 and sentenced to the Pennsylvania Death Row for allegedly murdering a police officer. This disc consists of previously unreleased radio essays compiled by Prison Radio, poems and statements recited by Assata Shakur, Rubin Hurricane Carter and others. You'll also get discussions with young men and women who have faced harassment, have had friends murdered by police, interviews with school board officials and public housing residents. Also included are interviews by Mumia with the likes of Bob Marley and Jimmy Carter. Mumia's voice is firm; you can feel the cell walls breathing with each word he speaks. Three songs are included. Most notable is the "Mumia 911 (Rocks the World Mix)" which features a lengthy lineup which includes Pharoahe Monch, Zack de la Rocha, Dead Prez, Chuck D and Black Thought, to name a few.

**Murphy's Law • *The Party's Over* • Artemis Records** • I don't claim to know a lot about punk but even I have heard of Murphy's Law. They've been around forever, making a name for themselves in the early 80's hardcore punk scene. There are a couple of MAYBE radio-playable songs on here but it's mostly too punk and energetic to make it on the radio. Unfortunately, you're going to have to buy it to hear it. And you should.

**Mushroomhead • *XX* • Eclipse Records** • So I just got the new record from Slipknot...I mean, Mushroomhead. Sorry for the confusion, but these two bands share the whole "we're pissed off at the world and to show it, we're going to wear masks" thing. Actually, the comparison is hardly fair. If anything, they can be accused of bad timing, since they have been terrorizing Cleveland(!) since the early 90's. To be fair, Mushroomhead is far superior to Slipknot. They use two competent vocalists, and blend their intensely heavy sound with a little bit of techno and, unfortunately, rap. "The Wrist" may as well be a Faith No More track, perhaps a sequel to "Epic." Add keyboard riffs and Industrial references and you've got yourself a pretty talented group.

**MxPx • *The Renaissance EP* • Fat Wreck Chords** • *The Renaissance EP* is a gift from MxPx to its longtime fans. These nine songs are a throwback to their punk rock beginnings...it is even being released on Fat Wreck Chords, the undisputed kings of punk. Mike Herrera's voice is melodic on catchy numbers like "Lonesome Town" and angry in others like "Time Will Tell."

**Nerf Herder • *My EP* • My Records** • This short EP is full of melodic punk songs with funny lyrics. I can just see myself singing "I've got a Boner for Christmas" at the family reunion this holiday season. Or perhaps celebrating my favorite drinking hole with "The Sportsman Bar." "Bridge Under Troubled Water" and "Hotel California" play on the classic tunes without being cover songs.

**No Innocent Victim • *Tipping The Scales* • Victory Records** • I'm sure that the dudes from NIV will be appalled to see that a goddess heathen

has reviewed their most recent hardcore-for-Jesus release. I will admit that while the lyrics are a bit preachy, if you can get over that, this is some rockin' ass-whompin' music, a grinding assault of sonic dissonance that starts with the first power chord and does not let up until your eardrums are begging for mercy. This is good music.

**OffYourself • self-titled • Fudge Sickness** • Emotional intensity is a pervasive quality to this power-pop/punk band. They definitely have an unpolished sound, but for the kind of dirty, raw emotion they display, it's perfect. You can feel the energy that went into making it. The music has great melodic flow and a real honesty to it. This is a true voice of youth, independent music, and life.

**Osker • *Idle Will Kill* • Epitaph Records** • It's pretty amazing to know that Osker is composed of just two guys who mix punk with some power pop to create an energetic, engaging sound. They have apparently grown up a bit, leaving behind their ability to piss off everyone around them, as well as the trashiness of their debut album.

**Outline • *A Boy Can Dream* • Triple Crown Records** • If you're not loving this within 10 seconds of the first song, you're a lost cause. The big guitars, the awesome melodies, tempo changes and powerful vocals all combine to make Outline a force to be reckoned with. They haven't created a new genre, but they are ready to show they're one of the best melodic hardcore/punk bands around, delivering a sound similar to Good Riddance, Grade, My Hotel Year and NOFX. These guys are undoubtedly an amazing live band and I can't wait to see them rock these tunes out live on stage.

**Owls • self-titled • Jade Tree** • Ah, the Kinsellas and company return in their latest musical incarnation, Owls. You may remember them from such bands as Cap'n Jazz and Joan of Arc. (The previous sentence is in honor of the late Troy McClure.) Fortunately, the pretension factor with Owls is considerably lower than the vast majority of the Joan of Arc catalog. The experimental tangents are more reigned in, the songs more coherent. The subdued set is almost country-ish at times, with Tim Kinsella's ragged vocals leading the way.

**Pinehurst Kids • *Bleed It Dry* • Barbaric Records** • Rock is alive and well. The Pinehurst Kids will make sure of it. Joe Davis is one of the best singer/songwriters out there. His vocals are awesome, lyrics are solid and the music is irresistible. With hints of bands like Crumb, Knapsack, Sunny Day Real Estate and Jimmy Eat World, the Pinehurst Kids could easily be called emo. But that's not the case. This is rock and roll. Sure, Joe belts out some emotional tunes, but the music pushes aside the emo drama and replaces it with rock attitude. This album is the band's third full length, definitely their best. This will hook you quicker than crack.

**Pistol Grip • *The Shots From The Kalico Rose* • BYO Records** • Here's more old-school punk for you. Influenced by The Clash, The Ramones and Bad Religion, this Los Angeles outfit is more in the street punk vibe. They touch on political and religious issues for all you uninformed kids out there.

**Planes Mistaken For Stars • *Fuck With Fire* • No Idea** • This band packs enough energy to clear a forest. Hopefully these Colorado rockers care too much about the environment to do such a thing. But the power is there, and that's what counts. Using mostly screamed vocals to push the music forward, PMFS really grabs the listener, hands around the throat, shaking rapidly. Yes, this stuff is intense enough to break your neck. "Rhythm Dies" (track seven) could take your head clean off. Duck and cover.

**Pseudo Heroes • *Betraying Angry Thoughts* • Theologian Records** • With his slightly smoky, just-got-over-the-flu-but-not-quite vocals, Sam Williams leads this trio through 13 melodic punk tunes, including a cover of Motorhead's "Iron Fist." The songs are full of energy and average at about two and a half minutes each, for a dose of get-to-the-point punk.

**Qualm • *Preventing Explosion EP* • Not Bad Records** • Hey, truth in labeling. It is, in fact, not bad. The first band that pops to mind when you hear Qualm is definitely Lagwagon. This is a tight band of four kids who play well and are obviously enjoying what they're doing. The pop-punk melodic influences of other bands are

evident, but they are not just carbon copies. It would make me much happier if there were more than six songs on this really boss disc. But the songs that are there will make you glad you have ears.

**Quasi • *The Sword of God* • Touch and Go Records** • Pardon the oxymoron, but this is the most depressingly upbeat music I have ever heard. Let me explain. A casual listen will reveal nicely crafted pop songs, with hints of the Beatles and the Beach Boys. Sam Coomes sings while playing his Roxichord (a variation of the Harpsichord) and Janet Weiss keeps the beat on the drums. Between the two of them they play almost all the instruments. However, a more careful listen to the lyrics unearths the anger held by Coomes toward many a topic, from the entertainment industry ("Fuck Hollywood") to Biotechnology ("Genetic Science"). This obvious juxtaposition of opposites is what makes *The Sword of God*, and Quasi in general, so interesting to listen to.

**Red Martian • *Deny Authority* • self-released** • This Seattle three-piece pops out tune after tune of socio/political punk rock. The music progression isn't astounding, but it's solid, melodic and full of angst. The lyrics are strong, using political commentary and social observation to guide the direction of each song. Musically I'd compare them to bands like the Angry Samoans or Dead Milkmen's punk stuff. The guitar parts are strong, the drumming is effective and the basslines are really thick and not lost in the mix.

**Reducers SF • *Crappy Clubs and Smelly Pubs* • TKO Records** • Some refer to this kind of blue collar punk as Pub-Punk, or Street Rock and Roll. Both terms are accurate, since these songs are gritty and aggressive, yet have a party attitude. Think of bands like Social Distortion, where the vocals are a little higher pitched.

**Restraining Order • *Last Time You Took Me Back*** • This couldn't have come at a better time. I'm on review number 10 jillion and I need something fresh and simple. Kind of like drinking hot Sake to clear the palate. Enter Restraining Order. They're rocking pop band, as they'll tell you, and they even blend in some acoustic and ska stuff. They'd do well opening for Weezer.

**Richie Hawtin • *DE9* | closer to the edit • Novamute Records** • Richie Hawtin (AKA Plastikman) is always pushing the envelope when it comes to his music, incorporating Roland 909 beats and other technologies into his live DJ sets. For *DE9* | closer to the edit, he spliced and reassembled 31 tracks into 53 minutes of minimalist techno influenced by the Detroit sound. Using some of his own tracks, as well as tracks by Carl Craig, Theorem, Basic Channel, Sutekh and others, he creates the techno record. Only the essentials are there: a pounding beat, a groovy bass line, and a few effects.

**Rilo Kiley • *Take Offs and Landings* • Barsuk Records** • If you enjoy non-threatening, pop-influenced indie rock, Rilo Kiley is for you. Fronted by Jenny Lewis's beautiful voice, Rilo Kiley are not afraid to throw in country references into the tracks, like in "August," which also features a catchy, sing-along chorus.

**Rival Schools United By Onlinedrawing • split EP • Some Records** • This indie rock EP is a treat for fans as it features ex-Quicksand frontman Walter Schreifels and ex-Far frontman Jonah Matranga. This group is comprised of the bands Rival Schools and Onlinedrawing, and is a project strictly driven by the comradery between these musicians. A couple songs stand out here. "Be Real" is a floaty track with good riffs and the basement jam, "Take One For The Team" is what it's all about.

**Robweoza • *Get Confident Stupid!* • self-released** • I can't pronounce it either. Big deal. It's a funny name for a funny band. The music?

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# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Punk. The band? Fun. I keep seeing pop punk in their reviews but this is more like garage to me. Just raucous, loud and fun. No heavy topics here. Other than "Rage against the latrine" and "I am ugly," of course.

**Rovo • Imago • Incidental Music** • Originally released in Japan by Sony Japan, Rovo's debut album *Imago* turned a few heads with its blending of Rock, Trance and Techno. In fact, their motto is "Man-Driven Trance." Two drummers handle the explosive beats, while core members Yamamoto Seichi and Katsui Yuji provide guitar and violin to the concoction. A revolving group of musicians handle the other instruments, ranging from synthesizers to wind instruments. The songs slowly put you in a trance, building you up, then bringing you back down. As they intended, Rovo are blurring the line between the analog and the digital, focusing just on the music.

**Sanford Arms • Too Loud for the Snowman • Pattern 25 Records** • Ben London (ex-Alcohol Funnicar) and friends spent about three years putting together this album. The slow process of recording is reflected by the slow tempo of these tracks. Mellow acoustic guitars and some strings accompany the keyboard effects and London's underemphasized voice.

**Saves The Day • Stay What You Are • Vagrant Records** • I've always thought that Saves the Day sounds a bit like Weezer. Now that Weezer is back in vogue, more people will know what I mean. They can be emo at times, and punk at others. They have matured a bit since their last album, *Through Being Cool*, so their fans may have to listen to *Stay What You Are* a few times for it to catch on. But don't worry, it will.

**Scared Of Chaka • Crossing With Switchblades • Hopeless Records** • This Albuquerque punk outfit has seven albums under their belt, all full of aggressive guitar assaults and gritty vocals. Their seventh, *Crossing With Switchblades*, is no exception. There is a garage quality sound, maybe a 1960's influence. There's even a cover of The Zombies' "It's Alright With Me." Forget Blink 182 and listen to some real punk, courtesy of Scared of Chaka.

**Scott Tuma • Hard Again • Truckstop Records** • Don't be fooled into thinking that you are listening to a drunken fool who has just picked up the guitar for his first time. True, that is the first impression of *Hard Again*. Dig a bit deeper and you will find a well-defined structure of layered instrumentation, at times augmented by Jim White's (Dirty Three) percussion work. His drumming is not unlike Storm and Stress' erratic free-form patterns. Overall, this is a mellow album, one to be listened and enjoyed with headphones.

**Sean Croghan • From Burnt Orange to Midnight Blue • In Music We Trust** • Croghan plays tunes that have a self-described "oft-desolate approach to angst and fear." They range from catchy pop to soul to combustible rock, and the lyrics are relatable to anyone that's ever lived with self-doubt, confusion, or pain.

**Shady View Terrace/The Lawrence Arms • split CD • Asian Man** • This was released a year ago on Castaway Records and quickly went out of print. Now it's back on Asian Man Records, and thankfully so. SVT delivers six tracks of their brand of hardcore, using sometimes-screaming-sometimes-singing vocals. They have a powerful, thick, energized, tempo-changing sound that is amped-up even more by the use of screaming vocals. The Lawrence Arms serves a wicked quintet of tunes that are sure to leave you awestruck. The vocals are gruff with one singer, somewhat Fifteen-like, and awkward with the other, somewhat Smoking Popes-like, while the music oozes melody and energy. You'll choke on their thick basslines and feel your blood pump harder with each drum pound. They're one of those bands you will fall in love with on the first listen, both musically and lyrically.

**Shannon Wright • Dyed in the Wool • Quarterstick Records** • On her previous two albums, Shannon Wright had played all instruments herself. This time around, she got herself a band, so she could concentrate more on the overall feeling of the record. *Dyed in the Wool* reminded me of both PJ Harvey and Fiona Apple. There is beauty in these songs, as well as an unsettling feeling brought on by the sometimes morbid lyrics.

**Si'Sé • self-titled • Luaka Bop Records** • Hailing from New York, Si'Sé is a collective of musicians who mix musical styles like a painter mixes colors to come up with a new shade. Centered on the vocals of sultry Carol C, who sounds like a cross between Sade and Dido, the songs blend downtempo electronica with Latin jazz, merengue, drum 'n bass, flamenco, reggae and rumba, just to name a few. This is a perfect album for the summer months, like a ray of sunshine that can be heard.

**Sick Sense • Out Of Sight Out Of Mind • El Pocho Loco Records** • Here's some basic punk. This is stripped-down but not old-school. It's like Green Day without the corporate production. They're a bit faster than the so-called punk of today as well. They have that piece of old-school in them. They kind of remind me of punk Suicidal Tendencies at times.

**Sin In Space • Asteroid Band • self-released** • This band's first release

is full of basic, catchy rock songs with a touch of grunge guitar work. The lyrics are cool and the vocals sound like Weezer at first listen. This four piece from Santa Cruz, California, really turns it up throughout the disc, high and low tempo changes with a popish feel. "Hell Fire" starts mellow with the echoes of guitar strings and teases with anticipation before reaching its climax. "Goner" begins with a driving bass line and "Fly By Night" stands out as well.

**Skycamefalling • 10.21 • Ferret Music** • Do NOT let the opening track fool you. And don't go from #1 to #5 to #10 (I don't know why you would) or you'll miss the whole point. I thought this was going to be some art house "musicscape" crap after I heard the first cut, but this is intense hardcore. There's nothing new age about this. Not by a long shot. Skycamefalling has shared the stage with Sick of It All, Juliana Theory and Dillinger Escape Plan to name but a few. Really meaty hooks on this one.

**Snuff • Blue Gravy: Phase 9 • Fat Wreck Chords** • Snuff is the only Punk band that I have ever heard that can have horns and keyboards and doesn't sound like a ska band, because they don't overuse those instruments. Their music is indisputably Punk...it just has a little Blues tinge to it. This EP includes new versions of "Ichola Buddha" and "Night of the LFs," and well as two live tracks, "Caught in Session" and "Ecstasy."

**Soulfarm • Scream of the Crop • Desert Rock Records** • After smartly changing their name from the boy-band-sounding Inense, Soulfarm focused their musical style away from the jam band mentality. It would be hard to pigeonhole them into one genre, though their sound leans heavily toward folk-rock. Country, pop, flamenco and Middle Eastern styles are all part of their repertoire.

**Sparechange00 • Fifty thousand Moments • Cargo Music** • Combining elements of power pop, emo and punk into their sound, Sparechange00 create a catchy-as-hell sound, particularly the choruses, where the melodies soar. Unfortunately, it clocks in at just over 18 minutes, which left me wanting more.

**Spyglass • Strategies for the Stranded • Pattern 25 Records** • Barbara Trentalange's sexy and sultry vocals are backed up by a densely layered sound consisting mostly of reverbed guitars, steady drums, flowing bass lines and the occasional trumpet and organ. The opening track "This Heaven" has a Calexico feel to it, minus the southwestern vibe. This feeling comes and goes throughout the album.

**Squarepusher • My Red Hot Car • Warp Records** • At the same time that Squarepusher's long awaited *Go Plastic* hits the streets, the first single from that album, *My Red Hot Car*, will also be released. This Two-Step Garage tune is quite catchy, with a bouncy beat and Drum 'N Bass snare rush snippets. Is that mellow, unthreatening computer altered voice saying "I'm going to fuck you with my red hot car?" The remix is a bit more of the Squarepusher you have come to know and love, more schizophrenic in the beat department and low on the vocals. Two other songs finish off the album (plus one hidden track). "Hardcore Obelisk" is more of an atmosphere than a song, with layers of sound washing over you to a relaxing effect. "I Wish You Obelisk" is the most erratic track on the EP, with what sound like incomprehensible vocal manipulations and waves of gentle noise in the background.

**Super Chicken • Shoot that Thang • Rooster Blues Records** • Apparently, Super Chicken's name comes from his preoccupation with chickens as a youngster, growing up in Darling Mississippi. I suspect it is also responsible for his poor spelling. He has been playing the Blues forever, but only recently dedicated himself to music full time. Though he writes solid Blues songs, he flirts with other styles, including Country and Boogie Woogie. Fortunately, not all his songs are about pain and suffering, but instead can be quite entertaining.

**Tara Jane O'Neil • In The Sun Lines • Quarterstick Records** • Tara Jane O'Neil's past gigs included stints with Rodan, the Sonora Pine and Retsin. As a solo artist, her songs take a more personal feeling. Even though they were recorded in a ballroom, *In The Sun Lines* sounds like it was recorded in a bedroom, not lo-fi, just more intimate. The slow tempo lends itself to the melancholic tone of the album, where drums are scarcely present.

**Tension Wire • Explicits • Seymour Records** • Tension Wire's debut features ten songs of uncompromising melodic punk rock. The guitars have a bit more low end than other bands, and the singer, although melodic, sounds like he might explode into screams at any time. Both qualities give this trio an edge that sets it apart from the rest.

**The Beach Machine • Companion • self-released** • These are guys that obviously love to experiment, and to a startlingly great degree. They are sonic wizards, and create moods in their music that at times remind me of Pink Floyd. Every piece is unique and has a character all its own. Wonderfully inventive.

**The Beautys • Thing of Beauty • Cheetah Records** • The Beautys combine elements from styles such as rockabilly, surf, ska, punk and rock and roll, wrapped in a 60's sound. Kathleen fronts the band, sounding a bit like Blondie's Debby Harry. The songs are short, with 13 tracks in 23 minutes.

**The Bicycle Thief • You Come and Go Like a Pop Song • Artemis Recordings** • Bob Forrest formed the Bicycle Thief eight years after leaving post-punk legends Thelonicus Monster. His music often deals with drug abuse, as he battles addiction himself and tries to remain sober. He sounds similar to Elvis Costello at times, as acoustic guitars back his emotional singing. He can follow a ballad with a foot-stompin' rocker without awkwardness or breaking continuity. *You Come and Go Like a Pop Song* is worth checking out.

**The Business • No Mercy For You • Burning Heart Records** • Since 1983, The Business have been attacking the system with powerful punk, hardcore and Oi for the working class. Songs like "Guinness Boys" sound like they were meant to be sung out loud at a bar with a beer in one hand. Others, like "Steal this Record," are clearly meant to upset those in positions of authority.

**The Clean • Getaway • Merge Records** • This is a pop-rock, feel-good album. Trippy instrument sounds come from all angles and provide an emotional backdrop throughout the disc. This band from New Zealand at times sounds like Beck, the Velvet Underground and early Smashing Pumpkins. Vocal duties are split up among the three members and sound very smooth and loose. *Getaway* was conceived by numerous jam sessions and rehearsals. The band members had no new material or ideas for the album, the music just found a life of its own. Instrumental tracks are included here alongside notables such as the intro track "Stars" and "Reprise 1,2,3,4."

**The Color Guard • self-titled EP • Suziblade Music** • Beautiful tunes with just enough energy to make them have a rock-edge pour forth on this five-song, debut release. Each track varies, showcasing the quartet's various creative pop rock abilities. The melodies are constant, using at-times-jangly guitar parts. There are many sounds you could compare them to, from Heavenly to Throwing Muses to The Breeders.

**The Dimitris • self-titled • Sonic Unyon Records** • I love bands fronted by females that can sing. Too many bands out there have crappy lead singers with annoying voices. Fortunately, Natasha Thirk's vocals were given the attention they deserve during the recording process, because she sounds amazing. Her voice is perfect for Power Pop, and even more suited for The Dimitris. Lesser singers would be overshadowed by the wall of sound provided by guitarist Dallas Kruszelnicki, bassist Jen Dean and drummer Jason Lajeneuse. If you like songs with melodic vocals and choruses, but like your guitars full of power, check out the Dimitris.

**The Droo Church • In a Pasture Built For Lovers • Hall of Records** • Combining elements of punk, classic rock and country, The Droo Church offers up 10 tracks of high octave rock and roll. The jangly aspects are really nice, often giving way to a bigger punch of rock intensity. The album was produced by Kurt Bloch (Nashville Pussy, Zeke, Kent 3). Put on your seat belt 'cause you're in for one hell of a ride.

**The Dropsience • Experimenting with Contrast • Happy Couples Never Last Records** • The subtitle of this debut by San Diego based The Dropsience is "an audio interpretation of color, light & space." Their music is a bit on the experimental side, but not unlistenable so. Fans of Fugazi and Jawbox should feel right at home listening to *Experimenting with Contrast*. The swirling layers of guitars and raw vocals made me feel like I was on the edge of a cliff...and I'm loving every minute of it.

**The East Bay Chasers • self-titled • Industrial Strength Records** • Fans of 1980's street punk will definitely enjoy this record. Aggressive guitars and even more aggressive vocals are standard on his self titled release by The East Bay Chasers. They have thrown a bit of rock and roll into the songs for an added edge.

**The Elevator Division • Movement • Department Records** • A little emo never hurt anyone, right? Maybe that's why The Elevator Division incorporates characteristics of emo into their sound. Some songs tend to build and build momentum until reaching a climax in the chorus. Others are slow, mellow numbers with emotional lyrics.

**The Facet • Adult Comedy • Not Bad Records** • This Denver crew has been punk-rocking out for over six years. Their experience shows on their latest full-length release. They have a beer-influenced snottiness that really energizes the album. There are great sing-a-long choruses, effectively used horn parts and awesome tempo changes to get your attention, as well. There are some hardcore elements woven throughout, adding even more of a powerful punch.

**The Foamers • Six Pints None The Wiser • Tent City Records** • Yep. Just as the title would lead you to believe - this is loose-lipped, old-



# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

school punk. They start off with the rousing "Sh#thole" and move onto songs like "You Stink" and "I Want Beer." Oil! Buy this and drink some beers! Oil!

**The Hissysfits • Letters From Frank • Top Quality Rock and Roll** • This all female trio specialize in pop-punk songs with distorted guitars, somewhat similar to Me First. They all take turns at the microphone, and fill their music with harmonies. The songs are well crafted and will keep your head bobbing up and down for about 45 minutes.

**The Impossibles • Brick Bomb EP • Fueled by Ramen** • Can there be such a thing as mellow, easy-listening punk? I think that these guys have invented a new genre. While I would not expect to hear it in the lobby of the dentist's office, this is a good disc that slows punk down a bit and adds a different feel to the music. There are only four songs on this EP, and track two seems to fall into the straight punk category while the other three tracks are well done and offer something new and interesting to list to.

**The Ivory Coast • Clouds • Polyvinyl Records** • The indie rock on this release is great. A 10-track jam session brought to disc after the band's latest Northeast U.S. tour came to an end. With high and low tempo changes, synthesizer, and clawing guitar work, this Boston based group has put together a complete collection of songs. A good example is "Sixty-Five Percent," with nice melodies, lyrics and anticipation. "Traveler" and the nearly fifteen minute "There Will Be Clouds" also stand out. This disc has some of the energy you would find at a live show and the drum work balances the up and down sound of the band.

**The Jim Yoshii Pile-Up • It's Winter Here • Absolutely Kosher Records** • The Jim Yoshii Pile-Up knows how to express sadness. The eight songs on *It's Winter Here* are full of it. Whether Paul Gozenbach sings or not, you can sense the depressed attitude that must have permeated the studio while the recording took place. Most songs are slow, with beautiful guitar work and a slow, steady beat. When Gozenbach does sing, your hairs will stand on end.

**The Ladderback • Introductions To Departure • Bifocal Media** • Emocore here. It takes a bit to build but it's not bad once they get going. They're a bit more experimental than a lot of the stuff out there right now. Like there are any emocore bands "out there." Sorry, I forgot that radio sucks for just a second. Anyway, this is interesting. It will grow on you.

**The Nerve Agents • The Butterfly Collection • Helicat Records** • Formed from the remnants of Bay Area hardcore bands Bay 87, Model American, Rely and Fury 66, The Nerve Agents combine their past to create an aggressive, potent brand of punk rock, not unlike Minor Threat or Black Flag. Check out their cover of Cat Stevens' "But I Might Die Tonight."

**The Standard • The Standard • Barbaric Records** • The Standard serves as a reference to guitar-based "alternative" rock of the past 20 years. Elements of the Pixies, Nirvana, Built to Spill, and others appear throughout this record. To top it all off, the vocals bear an uncanny resemblance to Geddy Lee of Rush fame. I know, it sounds unnerving, but it really isn't. There is a very immediate and familiar feel to these songs. It's like a good album that just disappeared and you haven't listened to in a while. You should quit loaneering CD's to your friends; they never return 'em in a timely fashion.

**The Swords Project • self-titled • Absolutely Kosher Records** • The Swords Project's CD is so melodic and atmospheric, that it is hard to believe they have seven members. However, they create their lush, mostly instrumental beauty with many guitars, bass, two drummers, piano, violin, clarinet, melodica and electronics. Think of Tristeza, the Letter E, or Godspeed You Black Emperor. The songs feel like they bleed into one another, quickly sending you into a trance.

**The Tank • Demonstrating Potential EP • Does Everyone Stare?** • Doggonit, I really like this disc. This is catchy pop that has sweet harmonies and a really good sound. They are somewhat reminiscent of Sloppy Seconds, but more polished and not as hard. This is music that you would definitely hear on the radio. Not shitty radio; good radio. It will be interesting to see if they can keep up this good song writing to fill an entire album. This EP is a good beginning.

**The Trans Megetti • Fading Left to Completely On • Gem Blandsten Records** • Drive Like Jehu, the Stooges, The Lapse. These groups come to mind when listening to The Trans Megetti. *Fading Left to Completely On* is uncompromising post hardcore that totally rocks out. I dare you to listen to this without throwing your fists in the air!

**The Unseen • The Anger and the Truth • BYO Records** • Here are 12 old school hard-hitting punk songs that come from Boston. These guys play it fast and hard and goddammit, this is what punk rock is all about. I'll tell you one more thing, you ain't never seen cool-ass hair like you seen on these guys. Buy it for the hair - keep it for the music.

**The Wanna-Bes • self-titled • Lookout Records** • So many bands say that they are not clones of other bands. I say bullshit. Be a clone, but

at least imitate a good band. These guys did. They have that super-cool Lookout! Records sound shared by the Queers, Screeching Weasel and other superior bands. The Wanna-Bes definitely don't take themselves too seriously with funny tunes like "Dropped on My Head" and "This Party Sucks," you will be hard pressed to find anything that you don't like about this CD.

**Thrall • Hung Like God • Repilian Records** • These guys are definitely going to hell. Led by The God Bullies' Mike Hard on vocals, they desecrate all that is holy. The cover art alone should get a century or two of torment in Purgatory! Hard's vocals lie somewhere between Peter Steele of Type O Negative and Fuckemos's R'S'S'LL, a low growl sounds hurt, like what you imagine a pedophile would sound like. Don't think this is some kind of Death Metal though. The music is strangely slow, acting more as background for Hard's diatribes than anything else.

**Three Summers Gone • Time Well Spent • Substandard Records** • Frankly, I'm just not an emo guy, but I'll try anything once. This CD has great cover art by the way, which really does give it a sincere feel upon first impression. The lyrics are mostly indistinguishable, which makes the listener concentrate more on the original song structure. If you like Samiam, Jawbreaker or The Descendents, give this a whirl. I appreciate this band's approach to punk and you might too.

**Thumb • 3" • Victory Records** • Forget that weak radio crap offered by such mediocre groups as Limp Bizkit, Linkin Park and Papa Roach. Thumb embraces a similar genre, combining metal/hardcore elements with a hip-hop aspect. But Thumb is good at it. Hell, Thumb is great at it and has been doing it for nearly a decade, one of the most popular bands of its kind in Germany. It features ex-pro skater Claus Grabke on vocals. (Yes, that's Grabke who competed for 22 years, from the late '70s to late '90s.) His vocals are perfect, angry enough but also well-sung and heartfelt. The music is heavy, using really huge guitar riffs with noisier parts and fantastic basslines. The drumbeats are equally potent, pounding forward with great time and tempo changes, interacting well with the sporadic, but effective, use of turntables. This album will pierce your soul and drain you.

**Thunderball • Scorpio Rising • Eighteenth Street Lounge Music** • Thunderball members Sid Barcelona and Steve Raskin are obsessed with the '60s and '70s. Their love for all things from those decades was quite apparent in their 1999 release, *Ambassadors of Style*. Not ones to fix that which is not broken, they stick to the recipe with their latest, *Scorpio Rising*. Adeptly mixing drum 'n bass, bossa nova, dub and a hint of jazz, they create what could be described as a futuristic soundtrack to a '70s film.

**Tight Bro's From Way Back When • Lend You A Hand • Kill Rock Stars** • Now this is what I call rock and roll. Three bands leapt to my mind while listening to *Lend You A Hand*: AC/DC, Led Zeppelin and Delta 72. Lead singer Jared sounds a lot like AC/DC's Bon Scott, while the double guitar attack from Dave and Quitty give them an omph found in Led Zeppelin. Finally, they have plenty of "whoa's" and "yeah's" at high pitch that reminds of the Delta 72's best overmodulated moments.

**Time Spent Driving • Walls Between Us EP • Sessions Records** • Time Spent Driving jumped out at me almost immediately, perhaps because I do much of my best thinking behind the wheel of a car. There's something very natural about driving around, listening to music really loud, and pondering life's little mysteries. This EP is the soundtrack to that drive. Their emo/indie rock style is conducive to speeding down narrow, winding back roads with stunning scenery and making important decisions about your future. Fans of the Deep Elm and Jade Tree families of artists will be fighting one another in the streets for this record.

**Tribal Lust and the Horny Natives • 56 Times in 81 Seconds • El Pocho Loco Records** • I was pleasantly surprised with this CD. It has tons of energy, and plenty of genres are blended. Lead singer Anthony Sancho sounds like an 80 year old Blues singer, growing through Funk, Ska, Swing, Punk, Rock, Country, even Norteña, a Mexican musical style, all in 16 tracks. Some of these songs sound like very old Chili Peppers, back when they still put socks on their dicks. There's also a Fishbone influence, as they have horns in

songs that are nowhere near Ska. While Ice-T ultimately took "Cop Killer" off of his Body Count record, Tribal Lust rescues it from oblivion and gives it a Metal makeover.

**Tricky Woo • Les Sables Magiques • Tee Pee Records** • A very aggressive rock album with doses of blues and funk. Sounding at times like Led Zeppelin and the Black Crowes with a touch of Lenny Kravitz, this three-piece band pushes their instruments to the edge. This disc flows from beginning to end and includes two instrumentals that give you a chance to catch your breath. Raw guitar licks and steady percussion help drive this album and bring back the old rock-n-roll feel.

**Truth Universal • Plantation Graffiti - The Naked Truth Dressed to Kill • self-released** • The thing that first caught my attention with this New Orleans hip-hop release was the excellent DJ skills. The scratching is fantastic and well-used, dancing cuts across the tracks and keeping the listener bouncing to the funkified beats. Once you absorb the dope wax-work, you'll notice that the rhyming skills are on point as well. The lyrics are intelligent, with amazing flows of enlightenment that dance from the CD to the speakers to your brain. This is an impressive indie hip-hop release.

**TSOL • Disappear • Nitro Records** • This CD would be more appropriately titled *Reappear*. After being MIA for a few years, TSOL, the real TSOL, is back. After original singer Jack Grisham departed the band, TSOL started playing regular Rock music. Then they faded into oblivion. Now he's back, and they are playing punk music again. His voice is like an angry Joey Ramone crossed with Johnny Rotten. These songs are pure Punk, thanks to Ron Emory's guitar work and Mike Roche's beefy bass lines. Newcomer Jay O'Brien rounds out the sound with precise drumming. Their sound remains a bit raw, unlike the current crop of Polished Punk that has taken over.

**Twelve Hour Turn • Twelve Hour Turn • No Idea Records** • You've got four emcore songs on here. The first and third cuts are a little more aggressive while the second and last are slower and more experimental. The last one is anyway. They're pretty good but it's hard to get a good feel from four tunes, you know? A nice little taste though.

**Unitas • Porch Life • No Idea Records** • These guys from Gainesville, featuring current members of Hot Water Music & X-Discount, play punk rock with a southern rock feeling. The eleven songs that make up *Porch Life* aren't all fast, but the ones that are kick some serious ass.

**Ursula Rucker • Supa Sista • IK7 Records** • What makes music beautiful is the interplay of the instruments and the human voice. Nowhere is that more true than on Ursula Rucker's *Supa Sista*. Her inspired spoken word passages mix well with jazz, hip-hop, blues and drum 'n' bass, resulting in a smooth album with a Philly sound.

**Useless ID • Bad Story, Happy Ending • Kung Fu Records** • These dudes hail from Israel. Who knew that those wacky Israelis could do an almost perfect cover of Green Day. This is a pretty good disc, though I am hard pressed to find anything that makes it stand out of the crowd of CDs that fill my mailbox eagerly awaiting reviewing. It has 15 tasty pop-punk songs that will certainly make you happy.

**Utahl • Zoo Sounds and Destructovision • Arborvitae Records** • There is a growing number of bands who specialize in beautifully arranged, somewhat experimental post-indie rock with plenty of guitar-string plucking and changing time structures. Such bands like The Mercury Program, Volta do Mar and Dianogah now have Utahl for company. I was not a big fan of the vocalist's sometime off-key singing, but the music more than compensates for this.

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# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

**Various Artists • Alpha Motherfuckers: A Tribute to Turbonegro • Hopeless Records** • It would be impossible to measure the influence that Turbonegro has had on the musical landscape. However, it is known that they had a direct influence on the 26 bands featured on this tribute album. Bands like Nashville Pussy, Satyricon, Scared of Chaka, Queens of the Stone Age, Hot Water Music, Ratos De Porao and the Dwarves, just to name a few. All tracks on the CD have never been released and the booklet has comments from each band as well as an essay from Hank Herzog van Helvete, a dedication of sorts to the bands that participated in the record.

**Various Artists • Bits & Pieces • Theologian Records** • If you are a hardcore Pennywise fan, you definitely want to get this compilation, since their track "Tomorrow" is featured here. That song has only appeared in another comp called "Soul Arch," and only 5000 copies were printed. Aside from Pennywise, 15 other punk bands contribute tracks, like Pseudo Heroes, Homemade, Dead Tree, Sugar Britches, Fishticks and Out of Order. 98 Mute, the Deviates, The Shutdowns and Cigar are some of the bands that contribute unreleased tracks.

**Various Artists • Brazilified • Quango / Palm Pictures** • This is really the perfect time for Brazilified. Growing interest in Brazilian music, as well as electronica makes a combination of the two genres inevitable and welcome. Featured are the smooth sounds of Jazzanova, Da Lata, Swell Session, Nova Frontera, Trüby Trio and Arsenal, just to name a few. All the tracks are decidedly Brazilian, with the electronica characteristics tempered down.

**Various Artists • Jah Warrior Showcase Vol. 2 • Patate Records** • Steve Mosco (Jah Warrior) has been involved in the Reggae and Dub scene since the mid 80's. His well received *Jah Warrior Showcase Vol. 1* prompted a second offering, this time with six Jamaican vocalists, including Prince Alla, Earl Sixteen, Anthony Johnson and Prezident Brown, each performing original songs. Each track is present in its original version, as well as in a Dub remix.

**Various Artists • Living Tomorrow Today: A Benefit for Ty Cambra • Asian Man** • Coming out on one of the most proactive labels around, this compilation's proceeds are all going to benefit a young boy the yet incurable disease "Lorenz's Oil Disease." So, regardless of content or quality, this is a commendable release. But let's not disregard this awesome collection of bands. The 21-track CD features mostly unreleased/rare tracks by such greats as Sig Transit Gloria, The Blue Meanies, Alkaline Trio, Hot Water Music, Face To Face, Tuesday and many more. The song selection is superb and Julie (the girl who put it together) deserves a zillion pats on the back for the effort and the cause. Get this, even if you hate all the bands on it. (But that's highly unlikely!)

**Various Artists • Mystic Groove • Quango** • Those of you not hip to the Asian Massive scene should really check this disc out. Ten tracks from the last six years by the likes of Thievery Corporation, dZihan & Kamien and Radar, plus a Talvin Singh remix. In a nutshell, this sounds like UK trip-hop with Arabic/Eastern samples thrown on top of it but really, this CD kicks it pretty laid-back, fo' real d'oh. Not for nothing, if you see this comp in a store, give it a listen - it's worth your time.

**Various Artists • Roots of Dub Funk • Tasty Records** • 12 tracks of speaker-busting Dub. An international cast of producers, including Technician (Australia), Messian Dread (Netherlands), Alpha and Omega (England) and Dubware (Italy), many of whom have recorded with the Dub Funk Association, which has four tracks featured here. Some tracks are brand new, some are reworkings of older tunes, all feature heavy bass lines. Two tracks stand out: Dub Funk Association's "Natty Dread Kung Fu" and "The Return of Sleng" by the Interruptor. "...Kung Fu" is a mid-tempo Breakbeat number with tons of kung fu audio snippets, while "...Sleng" is a jumpy Jungle beat rework of the classic '80s SLENG TENG riddim. Even though they don't fit in with the usually laid back Dub style, it shows that these musicians are not afraid to experiment with different styles.

**Various Artists • Sound Spirit Fury Fire Sampler No. 3 • Deep Elm Records** • Indie rock label Deep Elm started in 1996, and from the beginning, they knew they had something special. Now, with nearly sixty releases in their catalog, they still do things their way, free from music industry pressure. Thanks to that independent spirit, they have managed to release albums by some of the best punk/hardcore/emo bands out there. They celebrate this fact with this compilation, where bands like The Applesseed Cast, Camber, Planes Mistaken for Stars and Five Eight can showcase their talent and songs, which are always full of emotion.

**Various Artists • Sundays Vol. 1 • Nude Recordings** • After a long night of partying, you probably want to slow down and relax with some downtempo tunes. *Sundays Vol. 1* is the perfect CD for doing so. 12 tracks of soothingly slow beats by four artists from the Nude Recordings roster: E.D. Swankz, Gavin Froome, Telefuzz and the Verbrilli Sound.

Metalhedz members Hidden Agenda and Nude's own Jaffa also contribute remixes to this compilation.

**Various Artists • Sweet Emotion: Songs of Aerosmith • Heavy Hip Mama Music Company** • The folks over at Heavy Hip Mama would like to recognize the influence that the Blues have had on Rock and Roll, and in this case Aerosmith. For that reason, 13 tracks from Aerosmith's 21 album history were re-recorded with a heavy Blues sound. Old tunes like "Train Kept a Rollin'" as well as newer ones like "Cryin'" are here, plus classics like "Walk This Way" and "Dude (Looks Like A Lady)." I'm no Aerosmith fan, but I found myself enjoying this album a lot, if only because the songs sound almost nothing like the originals, but rather as bona fide Blues songs.

**Various Artists • The Anticon Giga Single • Anticon** • This compilation takes hip-hop to another place. Beats sound low budget, gritty and dark, using treble, horns and anything that makes a sound. The lyrics are included inside the sleeve and supply plenty of issues for the mind. The styles from each artist vary from mellow and smooth to an aggressive kind of delivery. With 17 tracks, written words and freestyles, it's hard to pick out the solid tracks, because more than a few stand out. "Pen Thief" by Buck 65, "Silence (Poor Me Part 7)" by Sole and "Inherited Scars" by Sage Francis are a handful early on. "Watching Water" by Alias and "ADD" by Sole and Dose continue the list, the latter uses an electric cello that chisels its way inside of you. This experiment is unlike anything I've ever heard.

**Various Artists • The Silence In My Heart - The Emo Diaries Chapter VI • Deep Elm** • With the sixth installment of *The Emo Diaries*, Deep Elm releases some of the best, lesser-known emo bands in the world. The compilation is successful in offering up 12 tracks (one by each band) of emo, but the styles vary greatly. And the bands' roots vary greatly, with acts hailing from the U.S., Sweden, Italy, Canada, Japan and England. Some of my favorites are Southpaw's melodic, emorock, opening track "Hub"; Benton Falls' "Tell Him", a beautiful pop song of emotional weight with sentimental lyrics; Italy's Hangin' On A Thread's "Flavour", an intense track with creative use of electronic tweaking and heavy guitar work. While some tracks aren't groundbreaking, for the most part this is an exemplary release.

**Various Artists • Warped Tour 2001 Compilation • Side One Dummy** • Unless you live under a rock, you know that the Warped tour has become quite a popular tour. Punk bands from all over grace the stage and ignite the crowd. Those that couldn't go this year, and even those who did, should run out and score this baby. It's 26 tracks are all either previously unreleased or hard to find tracks from Rancid, AFI, H2O, The Vandals, Buck-O-Nine, Sum 41, Flogging Molly, Swingin' Utters, New Found Glory and Anti-Flag, just to name a few.

**Viza-Noir • self-titled • Flameshovel Records** • With songs that develop from one or two repeating guitar chords, Viza-Noir shred through 6 songs in about 23 minutes. "The Pelt Room," the only instrumental track on the disc, leans toward math rock, while "Pool of Flame" reminds of Landspeedrecord's off-kilter playing.

**Walter Trout & the Radicals • Go the Distance • Ruf Records** • After incessant touring and the release of the live recording double CD *Live Trout*, Walter Trout & the Radicals come back swinging with *Go the Distance*. Trout is an accomplished guitar player, having been involved in the Blues scene for decades. His talent is evident on these 13 tracks, from the fun, party destined "Outta Control," to the somber homage to a fallen Vietnam buddy, "Bugle Billie."

**Water Rat Experiment • self-titled EP • self-released** • While the recording on this self-released, four-song EP isn't very good, it doesn't prevent the solid punkcore tunes from really rocking out. If this were on vinyl, it would be perfect. But CDs are so damn cheap to produce, I can't blame the band. The tunes are fast paced, have a really strong energy and a political bent to the lyrics. For a debut, the packaging is really creative, with the CD in a fabric, hand-screened sleeve and a booklet inside. The future looks bright...

**Welt • Brand New Dream • BYO Records** • Please don't screw it up, please don't screw it up...PHEW! I'm referring to the name Welt. What a great name for a band. Bravo! I was afraid the name would be better than the music but it ain't. This is straight-ahead punk. Not the radio stuff of today. Though they've shared the stage with Blink, Less Than Jake, MXPX and NOFX, they're making a name for themselves in the Orange County, CA scene and deserve to be heard on this coast as well. Really tight, really listenable punk.

**Windfall • Loud with the Windows Open so the Neighbors can Hear • Smorgasbord Records** • It's been a couple of years since Windfall released their six song EP *Awaken*, and I'm happy they're back. Lead singer Jennifer sounds amazing, capable of singing like No Doubt's Gwen Stefani one minute, and like Kittie's Morgan Lander the next.

The songs are energetic, with buzzing guitars and pounding drums.

**Yesterday's Kids • Everything Used To Be Better EP • Lookout!/Panic Button** • Here is an all too short 8-song EP from a band which will make you want to hear more. This starts off sounding like a smooth sweet pop-punk disc, which it is, but it evolves slowly and gets a little crunchier as it progresses, until all too soon it is over.

**Zeni Geva • 10,000 Light Years • Neurot Recordings** • *10,000 Light Years* is Zeni Geva's twelfth album, and it seems that time has not mellowed them a bit. This mostly instrumental recording is full of repetitive metallic crunches and anxious riffs, sparsely including death metal style vocals. Similarities to Turing Machine and the Victoria Principle are evident in the hyperactive guitar work.

## Vinyl releases

**Ace Lover • 12" • Marcion Records** • Ace Lover drops three tracks on this 12" with clean vocals and instrumental versions. He has guests in each track: Uncle Paulie, Flaco Navaja and the Writer's Guild. "Weed Spots" is yet another story about pot. "The Way It Is" has a cool Caribbean rhythm and vocals that sound like Puerto Rican rapper Vico-C. "Classic Character" has a mellow beat and a cool guitar sample.

**Grand Agent • Every Five Minutes 12" • Groove Attack** • This two-track 12" opens with a quickness, delivering a bumpin' hip-hop tune using a great loop and a non-stop rhyme flow. It's got a really jazzy feel to it that I totally love. Kut Mastia Kurt gets big props for his work on the track. So how do you best KMK's work? You get the legendary Lord Finesse to work the flip side cut "Know the Legend." Lord Finesse uses a more simplified sound, with a solid beat and awesome samples that pop in and out, enhancing every moment.

**INDK • In Decay 7" • Tent City Records** • Chomp down on this slab of hyperactive punk rock. It's loaded with aggression and attitude, two must-have aspects to a truly slamin' piece of punk vinyl. Factor in the socio/political lyrics, amazing melodies that really grab your attention and the bargain price of \$1/track (\$4 for this four-song 7") and you've got a fantastic release.

**Psychotic Reaction • Red Alert 7" • PsychoBubblegum Records** • For four years, PR has been tearing shit up with their early '80 influenced punk sound. Each song is a rapid fire assault with similarities to such bands as Black Flag and The Angry Samoans. There are four tracks on this release, including a cover of the UK Subs' "Warhead." It's not a new sound or a spectacular release, but it's a solid display of the band's punk abilities.

**Red Martian • Little Hopes 7" • self-released** • "Little Hopes" is a mostly-electronic track that I can't really figure out. It sounds like someone hoped onto a Mac and went about creating an uninspiring, moody tune. I'm not a big fan of this kind of stuff and had expected this to be more punk rock, given the band's previous material I've heard. The B-side song, "Observer," is a little more interesting, making us of arcade game-like sounds and a more creative sound. As a side note, this is the thickest/heaviest 7" I've ever seen.

**Sakinah Nabi • Projects to Pyramids 12" • Marcion Records** • Wow, this is a surprise. I wasn't expecting much from this 12". No particular reason, I just wasn't. But "Projects to Pyramids" is a fantastic hip-hop track with creative, original and dope-as-hell music fronted by female MC Sakinah Nabi who rips shit up with a vocal attack that backs down for no one. The cut bounces along infectiously, with an amazing bassline. "Hush" on the B-side gets another big "wow" as it is equally impressive, a little spooky and funky at the same time. The thing that stands out most on this record is how damn good the music is accompanying Sakinah's very solid rhyme skills. Don't sleep on this.

**The Black Heart Procession • Between the Machines b/w After the Ladder 7" • Suicide Squeeze Records** • A depressing piano line starts off "Between the Machines," followed by Pall Jenkins' stark vocals. The tone of the song remains somber, as is often the case with the Black Heart Procession. "After the Ladder" is a little more upbeat, but still they manage to make it sound melancholic.

**Three Years Down • Sneakin' In/Live Wire 7" • T02 Records** • "Sneakin' In" is a track about sneaking into a Kiss concert while the flip side is an AC/DC cover. Both of those bands suit the style of TYD. They play hard rock and roll free of frills or punk rock attitude. It's simply big guitars, a driving beat and vocals that are neither heartfelt nor emo. If you like a lot of rock with your roll, look no further. (Bonus trivia: Includes former members of Filth, the Wynona Riders, the Tantrums and more. These guys have been around.)



# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

## Label Addresses

(write these guys, tell 'em IMPACT sent ya)

702 Records, PO Box 204, Reno, NV 89504  
 75 Ark, 77 Chambers Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10007  
 Absolutely Kasher Records, 417 Frederick Street, San Francisco, CA 94117  
 Adeline Records, 5337 College Ave. #318, Oakland, CA 94618  
 Aerial Sounds, PO Box 4634, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034  
 Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA, 94141-9092  
 Arborvitae Records, PO Box 857, Champaign, IL 61824  
 Artemis Records, 130 Fifth Avenue, Seventh Floor, New York, NY 10011  
 Artzyal Records, 974 Island Lake Ave., St. Paul, MN 55126  
 Asian Man Records, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030  
 Baraka Foundation, PO Box 12933, Berkeley CA 94712  
 Barbic Records, 1809 7th Ave., Suite 411, Seattle, WA 98101  
 Barsuk Records, PO Box 22546, Seattle, WA 98122  
 Beggar's Banquet Records, 580 Broadway, Suite 1004, NY, NY 10012  
 Bifocal Media, PO Box 50106, Raleigh, NC 27650  
 Burning Heart Records, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026  
 BYO Records, PO Box 67a64, Los Angeles, CA 90067  
 Cargo Music, 4901-906 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117-3432  
 Caulfield Records, PO Box 84323, Lincoln, NE 68501  
 Cheela Records, PO Box 4442, Berkeley, CA 94704  
 Colleen Coadic, PO Box 190516, Anchorage, AK 99519  
 Creep Records, PMB 220, 252 E. Market St., Westchester, PA 19382  
 Damaged Goods Records, PO Box 671, London, E17 9GH, UK  
 Dealinit Records, PO Box 205, Rocklin, CA 95677  
 Deep Elm Records, PO Box 36939, Charlotte, NC 28236  
 Desert Rock Records, 3 Sansberry Lane, Wesley Hills, NY 10977  
 Does Everyone Stare?, 9825-103 St. #910, Edmonton, Canada, T5K 2M3  
 Eclipse Records, PO Box 215, Butler, NJ 07405-0215  
 Eighteenth St. Lounge, 1210 18th St. NW, Ste. 200B, Wash., DC 20036  
 El Pocho Loco Records, Suite C, 3838 Jackson, Riverside, CA 92503  
 Empty Records, PO Box 12034, Seattle, WA 98102  
 Epitaph Records, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026  
 EPL Records, 3838 Jackson Avenue, Suite C, Riverside, CA 92506  
 Equal Vision, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534  
 F.U.G. Records, PO Box 11157, Pensacola, FL 32524  
 Fat Wreck Chords, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690  
 Ferret Music, 47 Wayne St. #3, Jersey City, NJ 07302  
 Flameshovel Records, 1658 N. Milwaukee #276, Chicago, IL 60647  
 Fudge Sack Records, 444 S. Illinois, Villa Park, IL 60181  
 Fueled By Ramen, PO Box 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604

G7, PO Box 27006, 360 Main St. Concourse, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4T3, Canada  
 Gern Blandsten Records, PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661  
 Gonzol Records, PO Box 3688, San Dimas, CA 91773  
 Groove Attack, Schanzstrasse 36 / Gebäude 31, 51063 Cologne, Germany  
 Grounded, c/o Andrew Mann, 2107 Cherry Laurel Dr., Newberry, SC 29108  
 Hall of Records, PO Box 69281, West Hollywood, CA 90069  
 Happy Couples Never Last, PO Box 36997, Indianapolis, IN 46236-0997  
 Heavy Hip Mama Music Company, 673 Robinwood Ct., Wheaton, IL 60187  
 Helicat Records, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026  
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 Jive Records, 137 - 139 West 25th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10001  
 IKT Studio Records, Pier 29 1/2 at Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA 94111  
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 Palate Records, 57 Rue de Charonne, 75011, Paris  
 Pattern 25 Records, 610 20th Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112  
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 Quango, 601 W. 26th St., New York, NY 10001  
 Quartersick Records, PO Box 25342, Chicago, IL 60625  
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 Suicide Squeeze Records, PO Box 80511, Seattle, WA 98108  
 Suzblade Music, PO Box 66, Radio City Station, NY, NY 10101  
 Tanty Records, PO Box 557, Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 8QE, UK  
 Tee Pee Records, PO Box 20307, NY, NY 10009-9991  
 Tent City Records, 101 23rd St. Box 2341, New York, NY 10011  
 The Beach Machine, 13224 SW 46 Terra, Miami, FL 33175  
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 Touch and Go Records, PO Box 25520, Chicago, IL 60625  
 Triple Crown Records, 331 West 57th St. PMB 472, New York, NY 10019  
 Truckstop Records, 2255 S. Michigan, Suite 4W, Chicago, IL 60616  
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 Vital Cog Records, PO Box 7846, Princeton, NJ, 08543  
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 When: August 11-15, 2001  
 Where: Philadelphia, PA  
 Info: 215.241.7124 or [www.stoptheaca.org](http://www.stoptheaca.org)

**10th Annual Seattle Hempfest**  
 When: August 18-19, 2001  
 Where: Seattle, WA  
 Info: [www.seattlehempfest.com](http://www.seattlehempfest.com)

**Conference on Building Permanent Autonomous Zones**  
 When: August 30 - September 3, 2001  
 Where: Louisville, Kentucky  
 Info: [www.infoshop.org/paz/](http://www.infoshop.org/paz/)

**Jobs With Justice**  
 When: September 6-9, 2001  
 Where: Cleveland, OH  
 Info: 202-434-1106 or [www.jwj.org](http://www.jwj.org)

**12th Annual Fall Freedom Rally**  
 When: September 15, 2001  
 Where: Boston Commons, MA  
 Info: 781-944-2266 or [www.masscan.org](http://www.masscan.org)

**National Vegan Festival**  
 When: September 16, 2001  
 Where: Red Lion Square, London  
 Info: [www.VeganFestival.freeserve.co.uk](http://www.VeganFestival.freeserve.co.uk)

**GLSEN 5th Annual Conference "Teaching Respect for All"**  
 When: September 21-23, 2001  
 Where: Washington DC  
 Info: [www.glsen.org/templates/events/](http://www.glsen.org/templates/events/)

**World Bank / IMF - S28 PROTESTS**  
 When: Sept. 28-October 4, 2001  
 Where: Washington, DC  
 Info: [www.50years.org](http://www.50years.org)

**Queeruption 2001**  
 When: October 4-8, 2001  
 Where: San Francisco/East Bay, CA  
 Info: [www.queeruption.org](http://www.queeruption.org)

**Transform Columbus Day**  
 When: October 5-8, 2001  
 Where: Denver, CO  
 Info: [www.transformcolumbusday.org](http://www.transformcolumbusday.org)

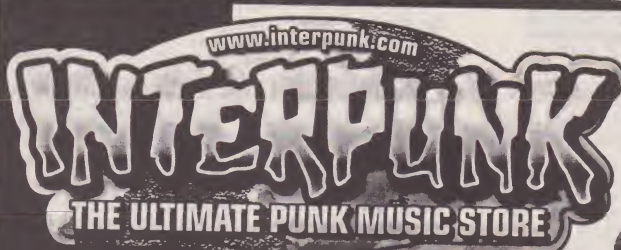
**6th Annual Boston Veg Food Fest**  
 When: October 13, 2001  
 Where: Reggie Lewis Athletic Center  
 Info: [www.bostonveg.org/foodfest/](http://www.bostonveg.org/foodfest/)

**Protest: Stop the Militarization of Space**  
 When: October 13, 2001  
 Where: Several International protests  
 Info: [www.globenet.free-online.co.uk](http://www.globenet.free-online.co.uk)

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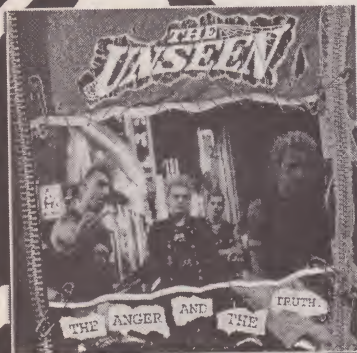


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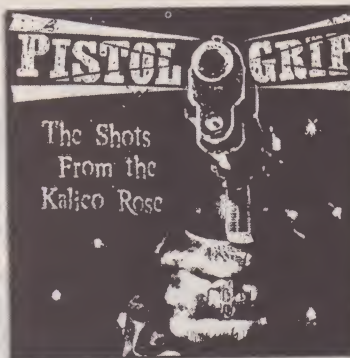


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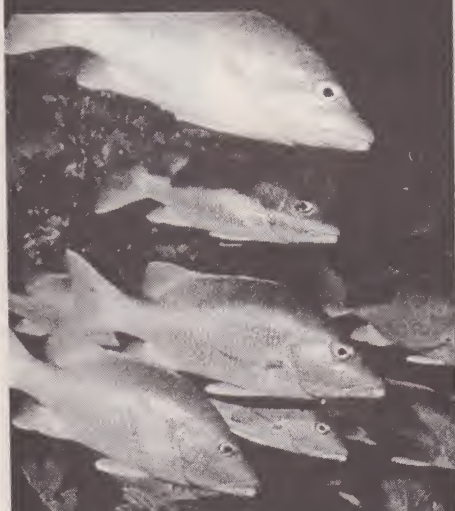


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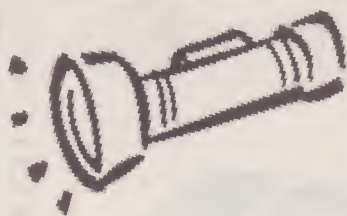
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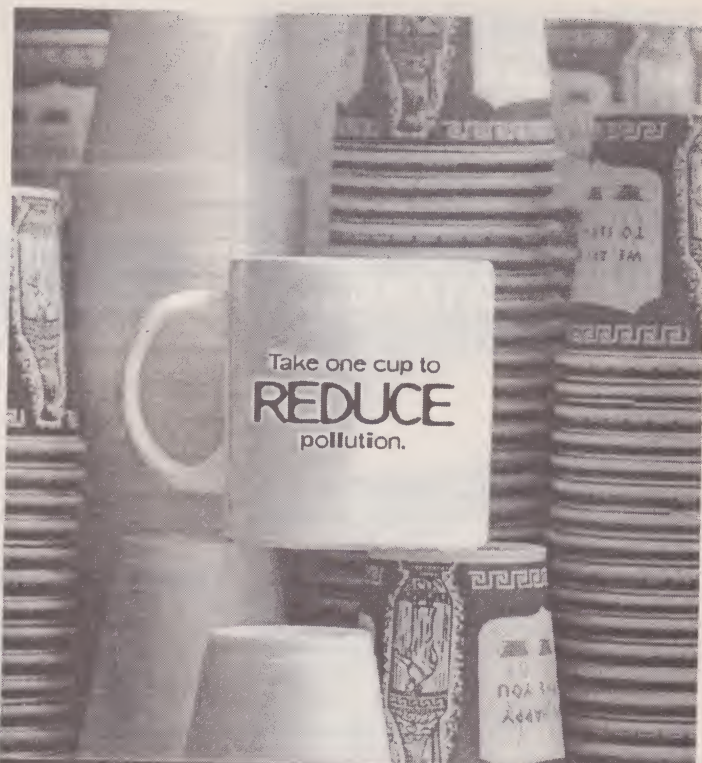
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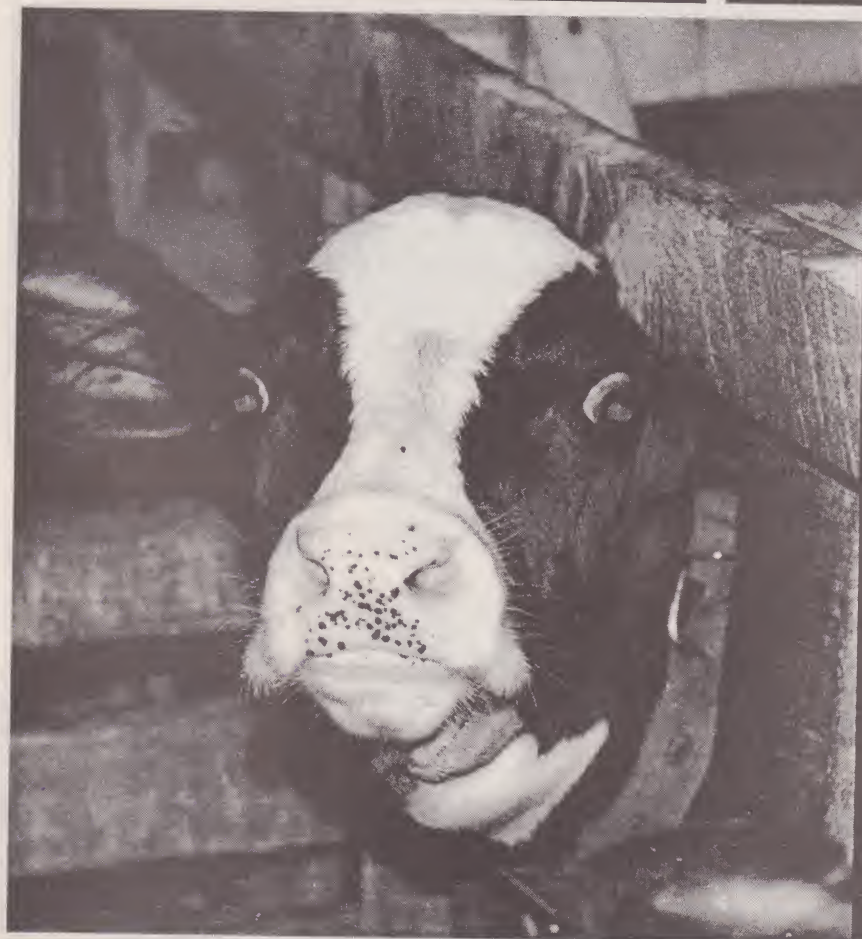
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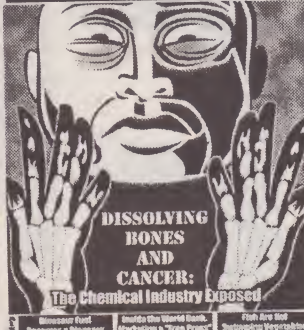
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issue #33

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Issue #32, April/May '01, Cover Story: Downed Animals - Diseased Food On Your Plate -- Also: Was It the Falun Gong or Chinese Deception?; Selling Our Environment for a Barrel Oil; Educational Equality

Issue #31, February/March '01, Cover Story: Ripe for Revolt - Building a New Left -- Also: Global Warming Heats Up and U.S. Runs From Kitchen; Pigs at the Trough - The Corporate Welfare State in America

Issue #30, December '00/January '01, Cover Story: Did Jesus Exist and Does It Matter? -- Also: Have You Had Your Ritalin Today?; Trading With The Enemy; Confessions of an Ex-Bodybuilder

Issue #29, October/November '00, Cover Story: Attacking America's Greatest Enemy - The Bloated Military Budget -- Also: Vaccine Conspiracy - Health of Profit?

Issue #28, August/September '00, Cover Story: Genetic Engineering - What's In It For Me and You? -- Also: The Deadly Truth Behind Greyhound Racing; The Spaceman Cometh - Corporate Rule & Control

Issue #27, June/July '00, Cover Story: Truth on Trial - Why Capital Punishment Deserves to Die -- Also: A Political Solution to Medical Errors; Unholy Alliance - The CIA and Fascist Terrorists

Issue #26, April/May '00, Cover Story: Censorship, Alive and Well in the U.S. -- Also: Rape Shield Laws - Who Needs Protecting?; Antisocial Security: Your Personal Info Is At Risk

Issue #25, February/March '00, Cover Story: Vowing for Equality - Same Sex Marriages -- Also: Big Brother Broadcasts the Nightly News; The Fruits of Facism - CIA-Socialism in Chile

Issue #24, December/January '99-00, Cover Story: Creationism - Monkeying With Science Education -- Also: Articles by two death row inmates; Senate to World: "Screw You!"; Racism in U.S. colleges

Issue #23, October/November '99, Cover Story: Big House of Horrors - Abuse In America's Jails -- Also: The Religious Left - A Moral Balancing Act; America is Selling Out Taiwan; TJ Walker columns

Issue #22, August/September '99, Cover Story: Prisoners of Conscience -- US Political Prisoners - Also: Space Exploration & Exploitation; America's Ritual Genocide of Iraq

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Issue #21, June/July '99, Cover Story: Imprisoning the Mind - Art Censorship in America -- Also: Facing 30; Death with Dignity or a .22; A Patriotic Left

Issue #20, Apr/May '99, Cover Story: The Chaining of America -- Also: The Death Penalty -- Reassessing the Punishment; School of the Americas: Training Foreign Killers

Issue #19, Feb/Mar '99, Cover Story: Population Control: How Many Are Too Many? -- Also: Imprisoning the Masses -- Dark Side of a Prison State; Human Rights Issues

Issue #18, Dec/Jan '98-99, Cover Story: Interview with Michael Moore plus, Are Women Just a Bunch of Boobs -- Also: An Inside Look at the Homeless Problem

Issue #17, Oct/Nov '98, Cover Story: Battle For Governor of Florida -- Also: Sexual Politics in the Workplace; Money Determines our Society

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Issue #14, Apr/May '98, Cover Story: ArtsPolitik -- Also: Paranoia; Anal Laws Sodomize Society; Environmental Chaos and Politics

Issue #13, Feb/Mar '98, Cover Story: Human Cloning -- Also: Surviving Bulimia; Purchasing Condoms and Lubes; A News Addict Speaks Out

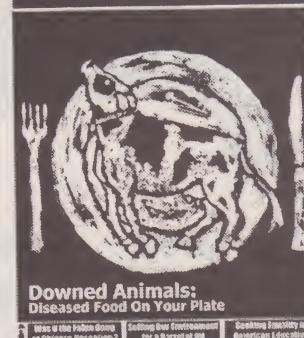
Issue #12, Dec/Jan '97-98, Cover Story: The Age of Anger -- Also: Preferential Treatment; The Culture of Anonymous Sex; Medical Marijuana

Issue #11, Oct/Nov '97, Cover Story: Homohatred in America -- Also: Antidepressants for Adolescents; The Swift Solution -- Food For Thought

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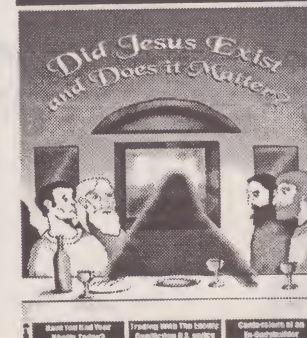
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